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THE WAGES OF SATAN.

Mystery of a Maiden's Birth---The Counterfeiter's Scheme---A Detective's Skillful Defense of a Girl's Estate.

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CHAPTER I.

"Those notes are counterfeit, sir."

"What!" indignantly answered the dignified appearing gentleman, as he gazed intently at the bank cashier who had uttered the charge.

"Every one of the notes you have offered me are counterfeit. I grant that they are admirably executed and difficult to detect, but the fact remains just the same." Reaching for a stamp that lay upon his desk, he marked the word, "counterfeit" in large letters across the face of each one.

"You are decidedly officious," exclaimed the gentleman. "You not only declare my money worthless, but you destroy it entirely. What redress have I?"

"None whatever; either you were imposed upon by some sharper—in which case you are to blame yourself—or you are a counterfeiter trying to impose upon me."

"You are insulting!"

"Look here," exclaimed the cashier, becoming angry, "you are carrying this matter too far. I'll just place you in custody until you explain how you happened to have those bogus notes," and, signalling the office detective, he told him to arrest the customer.

"This is an outrage! I demand to see the president of the bank!" he exclaimed.

"Very well; take him to the president's room, Hawkins," and calling a clerk to take his place, the cashier followed.

"Well, well, what's the trouble?" asked the president, as the little procession filed into his room.

"This man, Colonel Johnson, of New Orleans, called here to pay a draft drawn by Richard Barry, also of New Orelans. In payment he offered me ten one hundred dollar bills, and every one of them is counterfeit. When I pronounced them bogus and stamped them according to law, he became angry. I thought it best to arrest him and have him explain how he happened to have them."

"You ought to know, Mr. Dudley," exclaimed Colonel Johnson, "that I am above trying to trick any one with bogus notes. If you do not know me, look in Bradstreet's."

"You are known to me by reputation as one of the largest cotton and sugar planters of the south, Colonel, and I do not for a moment question but that you were an innocent possessor of these counterfeits. You should not be angry at the cashier; he was but following instructions. The law makes it a misdemeanor to have a counterfeit in one's possession, even though you have been imposed upon. That provision of the statute is never enforced where the possessor can tell from whom he received the bogus money. And, of course, you can tell from who you received this."

"Certainly," answered the Colonel. "I received it from a firm of stock brokers here."

"Their name?"

The Colonel hesitated a moment, and then answered, "Bills and Bills."

"Thank you," replied the banker; "you know it is our duty to trace these affairs as far as we can, and, if possible discover the original guilty parties. Your draft will be held until it is convenient for you to meet it, and if we can be of service to you while in the city we will certainly be glad to accommodate you."

"I am deeply honored and obliged," responded the Colonel. "May I go, or am I still in custody?"

"Go at your pleasure, Colonel. I apologize in the name of the law for the few moments you were in its grasp."

The Colonel bowed and left, not without a glance of hatred at the lynx-eyed cashier who had detected the worthless character of his money.

The rich southern planter went direct to the office of Bills and Bills; he asked to see the senior partner, and was immediately ushered into his presence.

"Why, what's the matter, Colonel?" he inquired as he noticed the traces of anger upon the dignified gentleman's usually urbane countenance.

"Matter? Why, a cussed little bank cashier spotted those notes you gave me this morning."

"The devil!"

"Yes; and to make matters worse I tried to bluff him and was taken into custody. The president knew me by reputation—as a planter," (he added the last rather significantly), "so he was all smiles and apologies. Just the same, he forced me into a corner and I had to tell where I got them."

"It's tough, Colonel, almighty tough," replied Mr. Bills, in a moody, reproachful tone.

"Tough? Of course it is, and no one knows it better than I; but such things must be expected in our line, and it is only sheer good luck that this is the first time. It is also good luck that I was the one caught; my prominence as a planter saved me, and now we must arrange to screen you."

"Well?" interrogated the broker.

"Send your cashier away for a week's vacation, or to transact some business, and put your brother in his place. A detective will be here some time today, and there must be a sharp man at the desk when he comes."

"Good! I'll see to it at once!"

The junior Bills was called and the matter explained. The cashier was sent to New York on some mythical business, and young Bills occupied his desk.

"I'm going home tonight," said the Colonel. "This business has shaken my nerves a little," and he left after instructing them to keep him informed if any danger developed.

Mr. Dudley took the canceled notes and went directly to the United States secret service bureau branch to confer with the chief.

"Those notes are beauties," remarked the chief after he had looked at them, and they are of the identical series and denomination as several others that have been handed in the past week. In every case, however, they were not detected until the clerks were counting up the cash and balancing their books after the day's business, so there was no chance to trace them. This is the first opportunity we have had to do any work and I assure you we will do our best to find the guilty parties."

He excused himself for a moment and left the room; when he returned he was accompanied by a finely-built, handsome young man, whom he introduced to Mr. Dudley as Frank Morrison, "one of the best men in the secret service."

In response to the chief's request the bank president recounted the whole episode at the bank for the detective's benefit.

"Now, Frank, I want you to go into this case and land the entire lot engaged in it. There has been considerable of the bogus stuff unloaded here the last week and no doubt the same thing has been done in other cities. They are undoubtedly the shrewdest band we have encountered in years, and I want the honor of their capture to come to the Chicago branch."

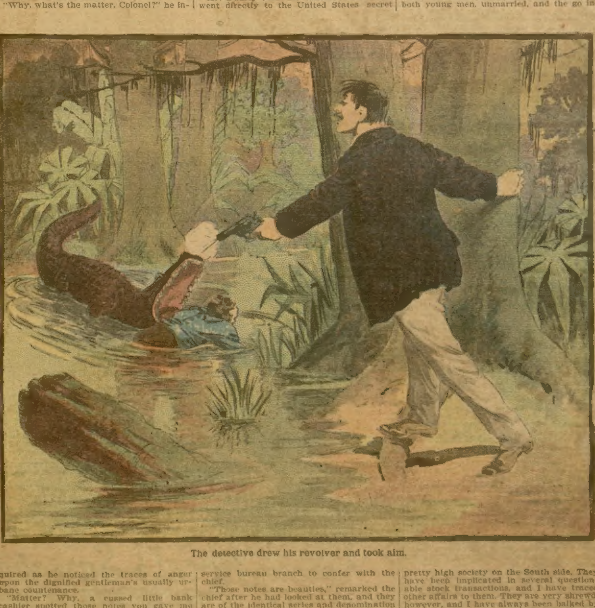
"Thank you for your confidence; I will do my best."

"What kind of fellows are these Bills and Bills?" inquired Mr. Dudley.

Frank looked at his chief as if to ask whether he was to answer or not.

"Go ahead," he said. "Mr. Dudley can be relied on."

"Bills and Bills are in my 'questionable book,'" said the young detective. "They are both young men, unmarried, and the go in pretty high society on the South side. They have been implicated in several questionable stock transactions, and I have traced other affairs to them. They are very shrewd, however, and I have always been balked by lack of evidence. In this affair I shall pay little attention to them just at present. The first thing I will do will be to look up Colo-



The detective drew his revolver and took aim.

ley. "He is one of th planters of the south. He owns of acres of land and is highly respected in the social circles of New Orleans."

"Exactly," answered Frank. "Either he is a dupe of Bills and Bills or a very shrewd criminal. The extent to which the rich and respectable element of a city rub elbows with law-breakers is not appreciated by anyone save detectives, and even to them it is sometimes astounding."

"Well, everyone knows his own business best," said Mr. Dudley, arising to leave. "If we can assist you any, call on us."

Frank soon presented himself at the brokerage office of Bills and Bills, and found the junior partner at the cashier's desk.

"I am from the United States secret service office," said the detective, by way of introduction, "and I called to learn what you know relative to ten counterfeit notes your cashier paid to Colonel Johnson."

"Oh, yes," said the broker, "Colonel Johnson was just in and he told us of the incident at the bank. We apologized to him for the indignity he suffered through our fault and made good for the loss of what we had supposed were genuine bills.

"It seems that we will have to bear the loss, as we are positively unable to find out through what transaction they were received. The cashier said he noticed them through their being brand new; but at the time they were mixed with others as if they had come in from different sources. He said he placed them in one bundle because they made an even thousand, and he had no suspicion they were counterfeits. The incident is deplorable, and I am very sorry we cannot give you information that will aid you."

"Thank you," replied Frank, as he turned away. "Just about what I thought they would say," he muttered to himself. "You cannot catch those fellows if you approach them from the front. It will be necessary to slip up behind them, and the way to do that will be to watch the people they deal with. I will now look after Colonel Johnson."

It did not take the young man long to learn that the distinguished gentleman was on the point of returning to New Orleans, so he immediately arranged to go there also. The trip was uneventful, and when New Orleans was reached the Colonel's carriage was waiting and his spirited thoroughbreds whisked him away. Later that evening, after the detective had secured quarters for himself, he hunted up the residence of Colonel Johnson, and then loitered about the quiet, deserted street, hoping to chance upon something that would reveal a trace of the Colonel's true character.

It was getting late now, and the watcher's patience was beginning to tire. Not a soul had been visible about the great mansion since he had been watching and the thought kept recurring that he was wasting his time trying to make a criminal out of a man whom the business and social worlds recognized as thoroughly honorable and respectable.

While he was thus debating to himself a man came along the street and entered the grounds of the Johnson mansion. He went straight up to the front door and rang the bell; in a few seconds the door opened and he was admitted. It was then ten o'clock—too late for a visit unless of business of importance. It might have the most simple explanation did he know it—it might relate to some transaction that would make it of the greatest interest to him. As the minutes flew by he began to surmise that the man belonged there—perhaps a son who had forgotten his latch key.

No, here came the man from the house, and it was Colonel Johnson who bade him good night from the veranda.

"Here's my chance to learn something, if there is anything to learn," thought Frank, as he strode down the sidewalk after the man. Unconscious that he was being followed, the Colonel's late visitor boarded a street car, and by a little sprinting, Frank managed to catch it, also.

As they bowled along, mile after mile, and the passengers began to thin out, it occurred to Frank that they must be some distance out of the city. Soon there was no one left but the detective and the man he was following. The man eyed him closely and it began to occur to him that there might be an embarrassing scene when the stranger left the car. Just then the car stopped and the conductor shouted, "Far as we go."

Both men started to their feet and when outside the detective looked about him in a bewildered manner.

"Going my way?" inquired his fellow passenger.

"I don't know," returned Frank. "I was told to ride to the end of the line and then follow the bisecting street east. There doesn't seem to be any bisecting street," was his glib response.

"Guess you took the wrong car, and you are in for it now. That car was the last and you'll have to walk back. Good night," and he turned and walked away into the darkness.

Frank immediately followed him, walking at the side of the road in the grass to deaden his footsteps. For a mile or more he trudged along just far enough behind the man to distinguish his figure in the gloom. Suddenly he turned to the left and disappeared in the thicket.

When Frank arrived at the place he noticed a footpath and judging that this was the course the man had taken, he unhesitatingly followed. Little did he know where he was being led, as he tramped along the path that seemed so secure to his feet. It was dark as pitch, the blackness of the night was made more dense by the luxuriant growth of semi-tropical trees, but with the courage born of many a daring experience as a detective, the pursuer plunged on into the unknown region. Suddenly he was floundering in a pool of water while the soil under him seemed to be slowly sinking.

"Ah!" he muttered. "I am into one of those terrible southern swamps. "I'd better let that fellow go and get out of here."

He turned, as he thought, in the direction from which he had come and stumbled and waded some distance, but his feet did not meet the firm soil of the path he had so lately trodden.

while he sinking in the soft, spongy quicksand.

"I've got to keep going or I'll soon sink out of sight, and I guess one direction is as good as another," so he again started on. One minute he was in water waist deep and the next he was stumbling upon some grassy surface that trembled from his tep. He bumped into vines and cut his hands cruelly upon the low, bushy palmettos, while the sound of his plashing echoed throughout the dense gloom of the great swamp.

Aimlessly plunging along he fell upon the knees of a great cypress, and there he clung, glad to find such a haven at last. While floundering about through the dismal morass his one thought had been to find a place that would sustain his weight, and, having found it, he shuddered at the thought of other dangers that had not occurred to him as he waded along. Monster alligators thronged these swamps, while some of the most venomous of the snake species glided about in the tangled vines of the morass, or coiled their sinuous bodies around the low-hanging limbs.

As the echoes of his splashing died away a sepurchal quietness seemed to pervade the gloom. The silence was as dense as the darkness itself, and unable to bear the strain longer he started to whistle a familiar tune, hoping to gain some cheer from the sound. The first note was frozen upon his lips as a shriek sharp and piercing rent the air. He trembled with terror, and an instant later came an answer to the cry, no less horrifying than the first. There was a flutter of muffled wings breaking the air and all was still again. It was difficult to believe that it was but the cries of some species of night birds who had become separated.

Now at his very feet came the sound of a huge body rising from the water, and a bellow such as he had never heard echoed upon the night air. There was an answer from close by, a splash as some monster tumbled into the water, and soon came the sounds of deadly combat between two great saurians just beside him.

They lashed the water to a foam as they gnashed each other with their sharp teeth; he was drenched again and again with the beaten spray. At any instant one of them might hurl itself upon the kness of the cypress where he crouched or with a mighty sweep of its tail, knock him into the midst of the conflict.

He cautiously crept to the other side of the cypress and was beginning to thank heaven for comparative safety when he touched a cold and clammy substance with his outstretched hand. Instantly it began to writhe, and like aflash came the thought that he had a deadly-poisonous moccasin in his grasp.

It was so large he could not span it; but grasping it firmly, and with an effort born of sheer desperation, he flung it from him, and drawing his revolver, he crouched close to the base of the cypress, while his hair stood on end as his peril became more evident. At any moment a reptile might drop from the tree upon him, or scenting him, a monster alligator might crawl up to his side and tear him to pieces.

Frank Morrison was no craven to shrink from a fee who came boldly up to him, but when it came to an ordeal such as he was now experiencing, his teeth chattered like an electric sounder. There was no relief, however; he would have to remain there until the light of day came to show him his way out. Counterfeits were entirely forgotten as he knelt and prayed for dawn, and no man was ever happier than he when, after hours of suffering that would have driven most men crazy, the first ray of light penetrated the dismal place.

As soon as it was light enough he ventured out, hoping soon to reach the edge of the great morass. In this he was disappointed. He endeavored to go on in a straight line, but the uneven surface and at places the dense undergrowth made it impossible, and when at last the shades of night began to fall again he gave up the struggle and crawled upon the stump of a huge cypress that had been cut away.

By the side of the stump was a sort of canal which seemed to have been cut by hand of man, perhaps as a waterway through the great swamp, or may be for drainage purposes. The natives knew that swamp as a farmer knows his own broad acres and they navigated it in queer looking batteaus which they pushed along with a pole. As Frank Morrison sat upon the stump the picture of despair an old negro came along, towing a large alligator at the end of his batteau. His joy at seeing the negro can better be imagined than described.

"For de good Lawd, white man, what yo'all doin' heah?" asked the negro.

"I lost my way last evening. I will pay you well if you will take me out of here."

"Get in," he said.

The old fellow went on poling the craft along the uncertain waterway and in the gathering gloom he ran the boat upon a partly submerged alligator. There was a sudden, spasmodic rising that disconcerted the occupants. They sprang up and the next moment the boat was upset and both were floundering in the slimy water. Frank scrambled to a nearby cypress and looked back to see his ebony friend in the jaws

ne monster whose slumbers he had disturbed.

The detective hastily drew his revolver and aimed at the alligator. He had the good fortune to strike it squarely in the eye and with a snort of pain the monster dropped its prey and rolled over upon its back dead.

Sick at heart he turned from the scene. He must spend another night in the swamp. As he glanced up he found two rifles pointed at him, the muzzles of which were so close that they almost touched his cheek. The side of the cypress on whose great knees he was standing was fitted with a door and in the aperture were the faces of two men, sighting along the barrels of the rifles.

"Drop that gun!" commanded one of the men.

"Never!" cried Frank, firing quickly.

One of the rifles flashed and his revolver went flying into the pool, while the hand that had held it was numbed. Instantly the other man struck him upon the head with the barrel of his rifle and the detective fell like a log.

In a trice they bound him hand and foot and dragged him into the hole in the side of the tree. Down a pair of stairs he was carried and then along a tunnel to a large room where he was laid upon a rough couch.

"There, Mr. Detective," said one of them, "I guess you will not follow anybody else soon."

"The gang will make short work of him," commented the other, as then they left him.

CHAPTER II.

Night had spread a mantel of darkness over the quaint old city of New Orleans, and the gas lights along one of the most aristocratic streets flickered and flared in the gentle breeze. At one place a canopy stretched from the curb to the entrance of a grand old mansion, mute evidence of a fashionable society event to be held that night. Every window was ablaze with light and from the street one could see hurrying servants as they bustled about putting finishing touches to decorations and appointments ere the arrival of the guests.

'Twas the evening for Mrs. Lauvre's reception and ball, and now a half hour before any one was expected she and her beautiful daughter Helen were seated in the reception room ready for the earliest guest.

"It is such satisfaction to be dressed in time and not have to hurry so at the last minute," said Mrs. Lauvre. "It saves ones temper and then you are always sure you are dressed just as you wish to be."

Helen answered her mother's philosophic remark with a smile as she seated herself in a comfortable chair. Just then the door bell rang and a moment later the pompous butler stood before them with a card upon the silver tray.

"Mr. Moore of the Morning Delta," he announced.

"Show the gentleman in," answered Mrs. Lauvre.

The butler drew the portierres, and the ladies looked up to behold standing before them a young man of perhaps twenty-five, of medium height, and built like an athlete. His hair was brown and a well-kept mustache of similar hue adorned his upper lip. His most prepossessing features were the clear brown eyes and frank, open countenance, which silently told the beholder of the honesty and loyalty of the man.

"Are you not Mr. George Moore whom I met in Chicago during the World's Fair?" asked Helen, impulsively advancing to meet him.

"Your surmise is correct, Miss Lauvre," he answered, a smile rippling his countenance as he clasped the outstretched hand.

"Mamma, permit me to present Mr. Moore," said Helen.

"Why this is quite strange," said Mrs. Lauvre, as she acknowledged the introduction. "When did you meet Mr. Moore, Helen?"

"Thereby hangs a tale," quoted Helen, smiling. "Be seated and I will tell you, or rather, make a confession. You remember you forbid me riding on the Ferris Wheel? Well, one day when you did not accompany the party to the fair grounds, I slipped away from the others while they were resting in the Louisiana building, and got aboard the wheel. It choose that particular trip to be obstinate. When the car I was in reached the highest point something went wrong with the machinery and the wheel stopped. I soon became frightened at the prolonged stop and asked Mr. Moore, who happened to be the only person in the car with me, how long we would have to stay. He reassured me as much as he could and made it plain that there was no danger beyond a long imprisonment.

"After about an hour I began to worry for fear the party would return without me; I knew you would imagine I had suffered some horrible fate. Mr. Moore volunteered to climb down the wheel and telephone you that I was all right; and he did climb down that two hundred and sixty-six feet, having promised he would fill his pockets with eatables and climb ack if he could elude the guards. As it happened the wheel was repaired when he reached the ground, so he waited for me, and I rejoined the rest of the party just as they had begun to wonder where I was."

"Why, Helen, I am so surprised!" exclaimed Mrs. Lauvre. "And I must thank you, Mr. Moore, for the service you performed. It really gives me great pleasure to meet a gentleman in whom the spirit of chivalry is so great."

"You honor me, madam," answered the young man, flushing at her words.

"Had I known you were in the city I would have sent you an invitation to our ball; but now that you are here you must remain," said Helen.

"It is impossible for me to accept your kind invitation. My paper sent me here to obtain information from which to write an article concerning the ball for tomorrow's paper."

At this juncture several ladies arrived who were to assist Mrs. Lauvre in receiving her guests, and Helen was left to give the reporter the information he desired. They talked together until the guests began to arrive, when he departed for the Delta office to write his article. Little did he dream the strange consequences his visit was to entail.

While he sat in the dingy old reportorial room and wrote, the grand ball he was describing went on. Beautiful women floated about the room in the embrace of handsome men to the cadence of a dreamy waltz. The light shone upon the polished ball room floor and sparkled upon the jewels so lavishly displayed.

It was close to midnight when Helen, feeling a trifle weary from dancing and also assisting her mother in the duties of hostess, slipped from the warm ball room to the cool and inviting conservatory. The odors of the sweet-smelling flowers and the ripple of the water as it splashed in the fountain was quieting to her nerves, and as she sank into an easy seat behind a huge bank of ferns and palms she wondered why such a pleasant place was deserted.

As she reclined there, listlessly drinking in the faint sounds of the orchestra, she suddenly became aware that the place was not so deserted as she had imagined, and ere she knew it she was forced to overhear part of a conversation. Helen was about to leave the cozy spot in which she was ensconced, but the parties stationed themselves directly in the entrance and proceeded with their talk. After hearing a few more sentences Helen became an interested auditor and her sensitive conscience approved of the act.

"It's all right, Jack," a voice was saying; "everything is arrranged. All you have to do is to get the girl and drive out to Dick's. He has the license ready, and, being a J. P., he will make you tied as tight as the law will make you."

"I hate this abduction business," answered the other.

"So do I," asented the first speaker. "But there is no other way. My wife and I caught it when she went to the convent. If we were to bring her home and she was abducted from our house it would cause no end of trouble and maybe an investigation, and you know we don't want that.

"Now, you take this note and drive down to the convent about two 'clock and ring them up. The note says that May's mother is dying, and that I want her sent home. My name is signed to it, but when the time comes I will swear it is a forgery. My wife and I will stay here until about two 'clock and by that time the hard part will be over. When you are married slip out of the country until you get her under subjection.

"The old man is out of the way and there is nothing between us and a mint of money save the act you will perform tonight. See that you accomplish it neatly. Once that fortune is in our clutch we will quit this other business; my recent experience in Chicago shows how risky it is."

"Well, Colonel, you know I'll do my best. The girl is worth winning, even if she hadn't a cent."

"Glad you love her, Jack; makes it all the better for all concerned. You will find the boys waiting at Abel's. Good luck to you."

They moved away toward the ball room and Helen slipped after them. It was, as she had surmised while listening to their conversation, none other than Colonel Johnson, her neighbor, and his guest, Jack Shepard.

Some eighteen years previous Colonel Johnson, his wife and baby, May, had come to New Orleans from the north; he purchased the elegant mansion adjoining the Lauvre's and at once made a bid for entrance to the highest social circles. He was a dignified, courteous gentleman and rich; his wife was pretty, vivacious, and entertained lavishly; their references were of the best, so society gave them a place among the elect. To those who cared to know the Colonel explained that the northern winters were too rigorous for his wife's health; this flattered the southerners and they considered the reason sufficient.

The Lauvres were an old southern family. The deceased husband's ancestors had lived in New Orleans from its first settlement. He had married a northern lady, and thus being from the North, Mrs. Lauvre felt kindly disposed to the Johnsons, and soon they were fast friends. May and Helen were near the same age, so they played together as children, graduated from the same school and as young ladies exchanged confidences so dear to the feminine heart. Each had numerous admirers, but the ones destined to cause their girlish hearts to beat faster with the first flush of love had not yet appeared.

During the summer last past young Jack Shepard had appeared on the scene. He was the son of one of Colonel Johnson's friends, and the Colonel made much over the young man. He was a welcome guest at the Colonel's home, and immediately

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proceeded to fall in love with beautiful May Johnson. With the full consent of her parents the young man paid her most ardent court.

The little beauty hated him. He was a wily man of the world, and as little versed as she was in the wickedness of men, she could read his character in his countenance; and what she saw there portrayed was too forbidding to merit her respect, while to love him was out of the question.

One day in the presence of her mother and father he proposed marriage to her, and she indignantly refused. The refusal made her parents very angry, and in his wrath the Colonel told her she could take her choice, marry Jack Shepard or enter a convent. With a sudden-born hate for her parents and all the world she chose the convent. They did not for a moment think she would go; the Colonel had but uttered the words as a threat, and he would have quickly changed them had he known how in earnest May was. Before he knew it May had written a farewell letter to Helen and was already in an institution just outside the city.

This had occurred some two months before, and May was still an inmate of the convent. Helen was dumbfounded at the plot she had just listened to. The revelation was appalling.

"What manner of man can Colonel Johnson be to treat a daughter as he does May? It seems impossible that she is his child; and then his mysterious talk of money and 'the old man'—oh, I can't understand it! And to think that poor May will be forced to marry that brute of a Shepard. He looks like a criminal and from the way they talked I should think they should both be in state's prison. I must rescue May—but how?"

Many impossible schemes flashed before her mind; but they were only visions, the result of a wild desire to aid her imperilled friend. Who could help her? she wondered, and as she quickly ran through her list of gentleman friends the manly face of George Moore appeared stronger than all the rest.

"The very one," she thought, joyfully. "A man who would risk his life to grant a favor to a strange girl would do all in his power to aid an innocent girl who was in such distress as May is."

To think now as to act; but two hours hence and the abductors would be thundering at the convent gate. She must be there ere that. Running up the staircase to her room she quickly donned some heavy wraps; from a little jewel safe she extracted a roll of bills, and then she slipped down the rear stairs and ran to the stables.

Old John, the colored coachman, was astir and soon he was acquainted that Helen had some unusual duty for him to perform. He hitched the horses to a closed carriage and Helen got inside; then he drove out into the street. There were dozens of carriages belonging to the guests standing about and the appearance of the Lauvre carriage was not noticed as it drove away.

George Moore was just leaving the Delta office as Helen's carriage drew up to the curb. He saw her face at the window and quickly obeyed her summons.

"Get in, Mr. Moore," she said, as he approached. "I know you are surprised, but this is an extraordinary occasion."

The coachman had his orders and as quick as George was inside the carriage he whipped up and they were soon rattling across Canal street and then along over the broad flag stones of narrow old Royal street.

"Yes, very extraordinary, I should imagine," laughed George.

"I know I can trust you," continued Helen. "Your act in Chicago demonstrated how noble and chivalrous you are. Tonight I find myself suddenly called upon to befriend a young lady—my dearest friend. Alone I am powerless; I must have help, and I have chosen you. When I tell you how she has been treated and the peril that is before her I know you will consent to help me."

"I am yours to command, Miss Lauvre," he said, quietly.

"Thank you so much; I knew you would help me. Tonight at the ball I overheard a conversation that revealed a most diabolical plot against my friend, May Johnson. Her father and mother were determined she should marry a northern man named Jack Shepard. When she refused she was told she must comply with their request or go to a convent. From what I heard tonight I am convinced that this was only a threat; but she went to the convent. Tonight I heard her father arrange with Jack Shepard to abduct her from there and take her to some place where he has friends and force her to marry him. Then they are to leave the country until May is ready to accept him willingly. I must save her from this fate."

"That is easy; we will inform the authorities of the plot and they cannot get her."

"Oh, no," cried Helen. "If they fail to get her tonight they will try again, and the next time we may not know of their plans. We must get her away from the convent and keep her where they cannot find her. You will aid me, won't you?" she entreated.

"Certainly; if you want her out of there we will do our best to get her."

"How comforting your assurance is; I know we will succeed."

"Now in regard to getting her from the convent," said George, whose active mind was already scheming. "I don't know much about those institutions. What ruse were the abductors going to use?"

"A note from Colonel Johnson stating that Mrs. Johnson was dying."

"Well, we have no note and no time to write one. I guess' reporter's nerve' will have to do instead. And after we have rescued her what is your plan?"

"You must take her away somewhere. Most likely I will be suspected and watched, so there is no one to look after her but you. Take her to your home in the north and leave her among your friends. They would never find her there. From some things I heard Colonel Johnson say I have very little faith in him. There is something very suspicious about his desire to have her marry Shepard, and perhaps time will reveal it. Here is a roll of money. I do not know how much there is, but when that runs out notify me and I will send you more."

The carriage drew up before the convent gate and George alighted. Soon the bell was pealing forth an alarm that might [illegible] meant fire or some other summons. Then a voice from within demanded to know what was wanted. George answered that Colonel Johnson's wife was dying and that her daughter had been sent for.

"She cannot go," answered the voice.

"It's a case of death, you know," called George.

"No matter; it is against the rules."

"Say, my friend, it strikes me you must be mistaken. Suppose you go see some of the authorities," suggested the young man.

"I will do so, but it will avail you nothing."

"Well, give it a trial, anyway," he answered.

George glanced at his watch; it was after one o'clock and the minutes seemed flying faster and faster. Shepard and his party might appear at any moment.

At last the gate was opened and George was taken before the convent authority, who put him through a catechism that almost swamped him; but Helen had posted him well and what he did not know of the Johnson family he supplied from a fertile imagination. Finally, they decided to allow May to go, and she was called, necessitating another delay. When she appeared and was made acquainted with the situation she was about to decline to accompany the stranger, when noting the defiant look on her fresh, young face, he said:

"Miss Lauvre is waiting in a carriage at the gate. She came with me."

May gave him a searching glance with her sparkling black eyes. He met her gaze with a steady look, while his heart throbbed with a pulsation new to him. In that brief moment came a resolution to rescue her even at the cost of his life. What suspicions May might have entertained were dissipated in that one glance; her heart went out o this young man, stranger though he was, and she resolved to go with him.

Just as they were about to leave the room George discovered more trouble beset his path; two of the older sisters of the institution appeared robed ready to accompany the young woman. When they reached the carriage he swung the door open and helped May in; then yelling to the coachman to drive fast he sprang inside and slammed the door. This caused some consternation to the convent people, but the carriage was speeding away, and there was no hope of overtaking it.

The happy girls were locked in each other's arms and crying from pure joy of once more being together.

"There they go," exclaimed George, a few moments after they had started, as a carriage dashed by.

"Who are they?" asked May, in surprise.

"Jack Shepard and his crowd," exclaimed Helen. "Oh, May, they had a most horrible plot laid to abduct you," and then she hurriedly told May of the conversation she overheard in the conservatory.

"Oh, Helen, you will save me, will you not?" cried poor May.

"We will do all we can. Mr. Moore has helped me so far and to him I intrust your future. You can rely on him."

"Oh, sir, you will not allow them to get me, will you?" she entreated, turning to the young man.

"I will defend your liberty with my life, Miss Johnson."

"I have, indeed, found a true friend and protector," she cried in gratitude. "I will put my trust in you, and will go wherever you say."

For a moment all were silent and then came the faint sound of galloping horses behind them. George opened the carriage door and looked back along the white shell road that glistened in the moonlight. Half a mile behind he could distinguish the approaching carriage, and it was soon evident to him that they were being rapidly overtaken. Shepard and his men had discovered May's flight and had rightly guessed that they had passed her on the way out.

That they were desperate men George did not doubt, and he expected trouble when they overtook him. He closed the carriage door and drew his revolver. Helen and May were greatly alarmed at this action, and their agitation was increased a few moments later by a shout from behind and the report of a revolver.

"The battle has begun," said George, and breaking the glass in the rear curtain, he began firing at the approaching hostile party, while the girls crouched in terror at the bottom of the carriage.

Another installment of this fascinating story will appear next week. Ledger readers are respectfully asked to note our premium announcements on pages thirteen and fifteen.

◆

No Old Maids in Transvaal.

A woman who has lived in the Transvaal says that "old maids" do not exist in South Africa. A school teacher seldom remains a teacher for more than one term, for the admiration of the young Boer planters is so great for a woman gifted enough to read and spell, and thrifty enough to earn money with her brains, that some well-to-do bachelor soon persuades her to marry.

The demand for wives in South Africa is never equal to the supply. The Boer woman is not beautiful. Her one charm is a pink and white complexion, which she tries hard to preserve. Her fondness for sweet cakes, coffee and armchairs causes her teeth to decay and her figure to lose its youthful slimness before she is in her prime, and many Boer women of forty are so fat and unwieldly that they can only waddle from one chair to another.

◆

Venerable Man.

"Of course, you remember George Washington?" asked the funny person.

"Washington, huh!" replied the venerable citizen, with a snort. "I remember Anson when he was playing town ball in vacant lots."

◆

Big Drop in Sewing Machines.

We are sending Sewing Machines out to any address on free three month's trial, making such liberal terms and special new prices, so much lower than any other house ever thought of naming, that our offer will surprise you. For free new Sewing Machine catalogue and special offers, cut this notice out and mail to SEARS ROEBUCK & Co., Chicago, Ill.

Womanly Sense.

If a person is ill and needs a medicine, is it not wise to get one that has stood the test of time, and has hundreds of thousands of cures to its credit?

A great many women who are ill try everything they hear of. This seems to us unwise, for there are remedies which are no experiments, and have been known years and years to be doing great good. Take for instance **Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound**; for thirty years its record has been one unbroken chain of success. **No medicine for female ills this country has ever known has such a record for cures.**

We have published more genuine testimonial letters than have ever been published in the interest of any other medicine. All this should, and does, produce a spirit of confidence in the hearts of women which is difficult to dislodge, and when they are asked to take something else they say, "No, we want **Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound,** which has been tried, and never found wanting, whose reliability is established far beyond the experimental stage." **(See offer below.)**

Letters to Mrs. Pinkham from Women.

Female Weakness 15 Years.

"DEAR MRS. PINKHAM:—For fifteen years I suffered with every form of female weakness, and had almost given up hope of ever being well again, when a friend insisted that I try Lydia E. Pinkham's medicine. I took four bottles of the Vegetable Compound, and still I was sick and giving up again when the same friend prevailed upon me to try another bottle. I did so and began to get better right away, and now I never have any of my old pains, and consider myself cured. I think your remedies the best in the world for curing the troubles of women, and feel very thankful that I ever found such remedies. If any suffering woman wishes to write to me privately, I will be pleased to tell her about the benefits I derived from the use of your medicine."—MRS. E. F. MARSHALL, 312 Montcalm St., San Francisco, Cal.

General Weakness of System.

"DEAR MRS. PINKHAM:—I write to thank you for the good Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and Blood Purifier have done me. I felt tired and all worn out, suffered with severe pains in my back and limbs. Since taking your remedies that tired feeling is gone, and I am very much better, and able to work. I would advise all suffering women to write to you, for I feel sure they will find help. I wish you much success."—MRS. MARY H. LOVE, Hillsboro, Va.

Mrs. Pinkham's advice is given free to all suffering women. Her address is Lynn, Mass.

Throbbing Pain in the Back.

"DEAR MRS. PINKHAM:—About two years ago I was taken suddenly with a terrible bearing down feeling, low down across me, and such a throbbing pain in my back, that at times it would seem that I could endure it no longer. I had heard Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound spoken of very highly, and I commenced taking it at once. After a short time, I was feeling very much better, but continued its use until I had taken six bottles, and was completely cured."—MRS. S. E. WADE, Fremont, Mich.

These grateful letters from women prove conclusively that woman's safe refuge when sick is

Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound

If you are a sick woman, fill out the following blank, and send it to Mrs. Pinkham:

A woman can talk freely to a woman when it is revolting to relate her private troubles to a man. Especially can she do so to a woman whose knowledge and experience in treating woman's ills is so great. **The one thing that qualifies a person to give advice on any subject is experience**—experience creates knowledge. No other person has so wide an experience with female ills nor such a record of success as she has had.

Full name
Street No.
Town State
County
Age Married, single
Have you any female weakness?
What is its nature?
Weakness of how long standing?
Are you confined to bed?
How long have you suffered?
Have you children?
Do you have painful periods?
Have you leucorrhœa (whites)?
Ever pregnant? If so had you easy labor?
Have you profuse menstruation?
Scanty menstruation?
Suppressed menstruation?
Have you displacement?
Anteversion? Prolapsus?
Retroversion?
Are you afflicted with sterility or barrenness?
Dizzy, faint, or blind spells?
Suffer from headache?
Are your bowels constipated?

Are your bowels loose?
Are you subject to palpitation?
Are you subject to pain in heart?
Have you good appetite?
Does food seem to digest well?
Do dots dart before your eyes?
Do your feet and limbs swell?
Troubled with cold feet and hands?
Are you despondent?
Does back of your neck ache?
Do you have sore places in your spinal column? If so, where?
Have you sore spot across back between hips?
Do your lower limbs ache?
Backache between the hips?
Have you pain across abdomen, with soreness or pressure?
Does abdomen bloat?
Have you piles?
Is urine high color?
Sediment in urine on standing?
Back weak? Where?
Ever had surgical operations?
For what?

Without money or price any woman can have a private letter giving complete details as to her health, if she will carefully answer the above questions and send them with a personal letter to Mrs. Pinkham.

Address "Mrs. Pinkham," Lynn, Mass. 7

When Writing Mention The Chicago Ledger. When Writing Mention The Chicago Ledger.

Johnny's Little Joke.

Johnny—Say, ma, hadn't the teacher ought to set a good example for the children?

Mother—Why, yes, of course, she should.

Johnny—Well, this arithmetic example is the worst I ever saw.

Womanlike.

She—Can it be that you really love me? I know I am not beautiful.

He—But I care nothing for beauty.

She—Indeed? Then you do not hesitate to insult me already. Pray consider our engagement at an end.

THE BLACK DAGGER.

Story of the Strange Mascot Mystery---The Fire of Human Hearts --- Who Killed Lord Basil?

By T. C. HARBAUGH.

Author of "A Sinner at Bay," "Man in Gray," etc.

(Copyrighted, 1900.)

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CHAPTER XIII.

YOUNG MASTERSON'S QUEST.

Donald Black, the detective, felt that he owed his life to Max Masterson who had fished him out of the river where Thimbles, with the heartlessness of a demon incarnate, had left him to his fate.

Of course the appearance of the game-keeper's son at that particular time and place both puzzled and interested the London detective, and after the rescue Black escorted his friend to his private lodgings where they could dry their garments and talk.

"I live here as David Berwick, in another part of London as Donald Black," said the ferret, in an explanatory way. "I have reasons for being David Berwick just now. By and by I'll be Donald Black again. You quitted Mascot Hall rather abruptly, I believe?"

"Quite so."

"I read the note you left for Lady Valerie."

Masterson smiled.

"Perhaps I should have seen her instead of writing, but my brain was heated by the story I had but lately heard—the secret which brought me on, what I fear will be a wild goose chase, to London. I need not hide anything from you, Mr. Black, and will not attempt to do so.

"For many years, in fact, all my life, I have believed that I was old Jocylin's son. The game-keeper called me his child and treated me like such, but the night of the murder down at the Hall he unburdened himself and stunned me with the declaration that I am in no manner related to him."

"Of course you were startled?"

"Startled is hardly the word," continued Masterson. "Old Jocylin said that one night years ago when he was not game-keeper for the late Lord Basil, I was left on his doorstep. He found a note in the basket that held me, saying that I was of good blood, that one of my parents at least was titled. You may be sure that Jocylin, who never had had children of his own, took me in, hoping perhaps that some time he would get excellent pay for my raising, which he did, from what he told me.

"The night of the tragedy he told me that I might find my father in London, that I was born in wedlock as he had ample proofs; but that family difficulties forced my parents to rid themselves of their child. What he told me set my brain on fire as it were, and I resolved to put off at once to London. The clew was very slight, a ring which was found in the foundling basket, and a bit of writing in my tiny stocking."

"Well, what success?" asked Donald Black.

"Very poor. I have found out but little. Still, I am not despairing. Tonight I happened to be along the river—I hardly know what took me to the spot—and I am thankful that I was enabled to render you a service."

"For which I again thank you. By and by we will talk more about your mission. I understand that you did not leave Mascot Hall until near morning?"

"That is true. I left the note with a boy to be delivered to Valerie."

"Were you back at the Hall after your quarrel with Lord Basil?"

"I was back after that, but not inside," said Max, promptly. "I went back for the purpose of having another talk with the old gentleman, but peeping into the library, I found it empty and therefore did not press my intentions."

"Do you know that your second visit gave rise to dark suspicions?"

"Heavens, no!"

"It is true. Your quarrel with Lord Basil was overheard."

"By whom?"

"By Valerie, for one."

"And——"

"By Hugo."

"That repulsive monster!" exclaimed Masterson. "If I owned Mascot Hall he should not remain a minute."

"I'll admit that he is not desirable company."

"Valerie really fears the freak. Once he had the audacity to make love to her and I wanted to throttle him for his impudence, but Valerie held me back. Of course he has no love for me and I suppose I will have to have it out with him some time."

"Hugo says that Lord Basil accused you of making love to another besides his daughter," said Donald Black, watching young Masterson narrowly.

"That is false. I met another woman one night on the grounds; but did not make love to her. You have heard of Lady Judith?"

"Lady Trevors?"

"Yes. She inhabits the Grange just beyond the stream which flows near the Hall. Old Sir Basil was infatuated with Judith and on the night in question I met her by appointment on Lord Mascot's grounds at the Fernery. She made the appointment and she wanted to ask me about the old lord's affairs. I remember now that she spoke of the Nabob's gems which had been for nearly one hundred years a precious possession of the Mascots. She said the old lord had promised to let her see them; but Valerie hated her so that she dared not enter Mascot Hall by daylight."

"Lady Judith knew, then, that Valerie did not like her?"

"She was well aware of that fact and spoke bitterly of the girl, saying that for a shilling she would steal me from her and thus revenge herself," and young Masterson laughed. "But, tell me, Valerie does not think I am concerned in that awful tragedy?"

"She is mystified, but not accusative," guardedly answered the detective. "You must admit that your note left room for her to believe strange things, especially after listening to the heated quarrel between her father and yourself."

"That is true. What a fool I was to word it that way and even to send a note at all. Better to have come to London and telegraphed her the truth."

"You see it now, Mr. Masterson."

"Plainly. And she is alone at the Hall with that distorted shape, Hugo?"

"I suppose so."

"Say, I'll go back tomorrow. I'll take the evening express and surprise Valerie who will forgive me, I know."

"Don't go before tomorrow night, for I may have some word to send with you. By Jove! I seem to feel the long talons of that human bird of prey at my throat yet," and Black felt his throat where the fingers of Thimbles had been. "Wait! I'll fix the fellow. And his titled roustabout employer, too! I know the whole ganag of them. But I want to know who killed Sir Basil Mascot?"

"Do you think you will ever know?" eagerly asked young Masterson.

"Will I?" and the detective smiled. "I will answer that question in the future. So Lady Judith wanted to see the Indian gems, did she?"

"That's what she said."

"Why didn't she get Hugo to exhibit them to her? He was their Cerberus."

"She spoke of that plan, but said the hunchback was so repulsive that she abominated his presence."

Donald Black rose and took a turn about the room.

"You can remain here during the rest of your stay in the city," he said, suddenly addressing the young man.

Max thanked him for the invitation and said he would accept.

"But I want to get back to the Hall. I can prosecute my search for my true identity some other time."

"And I will help you," said Black.

Just then a rap sounded on the detective's door and he opened it to greet the face of the housekeeper.

"A message from a boy on the front step," said the landlady, handing the ferret a peculiar looking envelope.

"From the office," he said, with a glance at young Masterson. "I wonder what's up now?"

Max watched Donald Black as he opened the message and the following moment he heard an ejaculation of surprise.

"This is the unexpected. Read that," and Black handed the message to Masterson, who read:

"Black: If this reaches you, you will know that the young lady, Valerie, of Mascot Hall, called at the office for you at 10:30 tonight. She is stopping at 333 Courtenay street and has some important news for you. All O. K. here.—Simpson."

Max Masterson looked up bewildered.

"Valerie in London?" he exclaimed. "It seems impossible. Let us see her at once."

"Wait," said the detective. "It is 1:40 now. Her news will keep."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CRY FOR HELP.

"Yes, I know her news will keep," said young Masterson, his eagerness to see Valerie very important. She was laboring under some excitement heightened by her disappointment at not finding you here. You [illegible] find her at 333 Courtenay street, no doubt."

"I'll see her in the morning."

Ten minutes later Donald Black was on his way back to his companion, whom he did not disturb, but turned in for a brief nap.

At precisely nine the following morning he and Max Masterson appeared at Mrs. James' door and encountered that person, whose face showed signs of great anxiety.

"Well, she isn't here yet," exclaimed Mrs. James.

"Then, you guess our errand?" said the detective.

"Yes, for here is a message for her. It was delivered an hour ago."

"A message for Valerie?" exclaimed Masterson.

Mrs. James produced the buff envelope, which indicated a telegram, and handed it without reserve to Donald Black.

"But she was to have been here last night," said the detective.

"Indeed? Well, she would have been welcome, I assure you. But just now I haven't a single lodger in my house."

The two men looked at one another greatly perplexed.

"There's something wrong," said Max.

"Worse than that—something dark," was the reply.

Black proceeded to open the envelope and in another minute he was reading the following message:

"Lady Valerie: Come back at once. Hugo is carrying on terrible. I am alarmed.—Nolan."

Masterson, looking over the detective's shoulder, read the startling message with him, and for a moment neither spoke.

"Is it bad?" inquired Mrs. James.

"It's not very good," was the answer. "Valerie did not telegraph that she was coming?"

"Not a word. I cannot think that she came to London and did not put up here."

"She came to London—last night," said the detective, deliberately. "I have proof of that. She left a certain place with the intention of coming to your house."

"Well, she didn't turn up here."

Telling Mrs. James to send word to his lodgings should Valerie turn up or she get any news at all of her, the two men went away.

"What do you think?" eagerly asked Max.

"Foul play."

"Trapped?"

"It looks like it."

The detective walked some distance before he spoke again.

Evidently his mind was busy and Masterson watched him with a great deal of curiosity.

"I wonder what's got into the hunchback?" said the latter at last.

"Nolan did not explain. Hugo is a bundle of nerves and a fiend of the first water. The fellow must be curbed and I fear Mrs. Nolan is not equal to the emergency."

Max laid his hand on Donald's arm.

"Do you want me to go back there?" he asked.

"Not just yet."

"I'm at your service, but I would like to solve the mystery of Valerie's disappearance."

"We must do that as soon as possible. We must trace the girl from the offices. Come! She went thither in a cab. We must find the cabby."

Donald Black knew that there are a score of cab stations in London; but he reasoned that Valerie would have taken one at Charing Cross for the detective office, and thither the two men went.

It did not take them long to find the cab men in front of the great depot and their task began.

"Jumpy took charge of a young lady like that, sir," said one of the men after listening to Black's description of Valerie. "She wore a dark fitting suit with a trimmed jacket. I remember her well. She was Jumpy's fare."

"And where's Jumpy?"

"He hasn't showed up this morning yet."

"Where does he hold forth?"

It took a little time to find out this and Donald Black posted away with Masterson at his heels.

"We've got the scent," was all he said to the young man. "We'll get something out of Jumpy, if we can find him."

In one of the dark and dingy streets of London and in a room which was more like a den and up three flights of stairs they found a man lying on a pallet of rags.

He was fast asleep, but Black shook him back to consciousness and the outer world and checked his string of oaths with decided sternness.

"You drove a young lady from Charing Cross to Wellington street last night?" said the detective.

"Sir?"

"Come, you heard me, Jumpy. What became of the girl?"

"Really, sir, I dunno."

"Where did you leave her?"

"Confound if I can just tell the exact spot. You see the hoss got on his mettle and ran away."

"Nonsense!" cried the ferret.

"It's a holy truth. We had just left Wellington street and the hanimal took the bit beyond my power to hold him in."

"But you left the girl somewhere."

"See here. Some bloke ran into me. I remember that. In a moment I was turned upside down, the cab was topsy turvy, and a man was swearing at the whole world and mankind in general."

"The man who ran into you?"

"Yes; you see, there was the usual fog and——"

"You had your usual load on, eh, Jumpy?"

"I confess that my brain wasn't just as clear as it is sometimes; I tried to avoid the other fellow, but he ran spang into me and we went down together."

"Enough of that," sternly cried the detective. "What became of the girl?"

"Don't know unless she accepted of the gentleman's hospitality."

"Did he offer it?"

"Of course he did."

"Who was he?"

"See here; what's in all this for Jumpy?"

"Bridewell if you don't tell the truth without further ceremony," exclaimed the detective.

A frightened look settled on Jumpy's face and he darted a quick look toward the door, but the hand of Donald Black closed like a vise on his arm.

"Out with the man's name. You weren't too drunk to not recognize him."

"Of course I saw him, for he came close to me and demanded to know why I ran into him when it was all the other way."

"His name and be quick about it," cried Black.

"It was his grace, Sir Reginald Henlow."

Max Masterson uttered an exclamation of astonishment, but Donald Black did not speak.

"You saw him plainly, did you, Jumpy?"

"Quite so, your honor."

"That will do. Here's a bit for another cup and thanks besides," said Black, handing the man some coin, and then, looking swiftly at Masterson, he almost bounded from the place.

CHAPTER XVI.

A TERRIBLE REVELATION.

Down in the street Donald Black turned to Max and smiled.

"What do you think now?" he asked.

"I am thinking how I will treat that titled villain the moment I catch sight of him," was the reply.

"Bridle your passions, young man," responded the detective. "We want all our coolness now. I recall a certain cry I heard last night and if I had acted then I believe I could have rescued Valerie from the net of this scoundrel."

"Last night?"

"Yes; I was out while you slept and I heard a cry for help."

"From Valerie?"

"It must have been."

Five minutes later the pair took a cab and the detective gave directions where to drive.

In a short time the vehicle turned into a certain street and by the detective's command stopped at a corner.

The men alighted and Donald Black led the way to a house, the steps of which he mounted without hesitation.

The ring was answered by a tall, dark-faced woman, who started just a trifle when she caught sight of her visitors.

Mrs. Harriet Craigie looked both perplexed and defiant and faced the two men with a deep-seated flash in her eyes.

"How's your daughter this morning?" queried the detective.

"My daughter? I have no daughter."

"Why, you said last night, you know, that erie visible in his countenance, "but, hang it all, Mr. Black, I want to see her now!"

"You forget that she has come up from Mascot Hall and must be tired. Tomorrow will do. Three hundred and thirty-three Courtenay street. That is in a good neighborhood, but there is no hotel there."

"She must be staying with a Mrs. James who keeps a quiet boarding house for people who don't want to appear prominent while in the city. She told me once that she had stopped there and found the place home-like and all that. Tomorrow be it, then."

It was agreed between the two men that on the following day at nine they would call at 333 Courtenay street and see Valerie, and Masterson sought the couch which the detective placed at his disposal.

"I may go out tonight, but don't let my going disturb you," said Donald Black to the young man. "A man of my sort has but little rest."

"You are not going to haul Thimbles into your net?"

"Not now. Let him for the present believe that I am feeding the fishes in the Thames," smiled the other. "The tables will be turned on the pair ere long. Just now I have another little quest. Go to sleep and dream of Valerie, for she's a splendid girl, worth her weight in gold."

Donald Black changed his clothes and left the house.

As David Berwick, he made his way to the club where he had encountered Sir Reginald Henlow on many occasions, and shortly after his entrance the titled mountebank put in an appearance.

He greeted Berwick good-naturedly and the two men were soon seated at a table smoking while they chatted.

"By the way, Sir Reginald, I suppose you have read an account of the tragedy at Mascot Hall in Kent?" said the detective.

Lazy Liver

"I have been troubled a great deal with a torpid liver, which produces constipation. I found CASCARETS to be all you claim for them, and secured such relief the first trial, that I purchased another supply and was completely cured. I shall only be too glad to recommend Cascarets whenever the opportunity is presented." J. A. SMITH.
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When Writing Mention The Chicago Ledger.

"But a paragraph or two," was the reply. "Such things never interest me."

"I thought you knew Lord Mascot; in fact, I believe you once told me that you had visited the Hall."

"Oh, did I? Well, I have been down there. Right snug place and Mascot was well fixed, too."

"I understand that he leaves but one child, a daughter, who will be a good catch for some one."

"Quite a catch for some fool who wants to put his neck into the noose."

"Not the hangman's noose?"

Sir Reginald started.

"Oh, no. The other one which does not kill so quick."

"I wouldn't mind undergoing the torture for a wife with the dowry which Lady Mascot will enjoy," smiled Berwick.

"Why don't you try it?" replied Sir Reginald. "I got a glimpse of the hereine of Mascot once and she's pretty."

"That would compensate a fellow somewhat for his labors in catching her."

Sir Reginald toyed with his cane and puffed his perfecto awhile in silence.

"Some one told me about some old gems which Lord Basil used to have."

"Family heirlooms."

"Yes, from India—the trophies of some war with the natives when the Nabobs had gems and gold galore and lost all with their lives besides to the British troops. Did old Lord Mascot ever tell you about those gems?"

"I believe not."

"Then he kept the secret well," said the detective. "I take a good deal of interest in gems; in fact, I spend more on stones than I ought to; but you know every man has a hobby and he generally rides it to death."

"What's yours?"

"Gems," answered Berwick.

"I am partial to gems myself, but I cannot buy many just now. Of course I wouldn't part with the family gems for the world, no matter how hard I was pressed, Berwick. You've never seen my heirlooms, I presume?"

"Never had the chance."

Sir Reginald Henlow consulted his watch and ordered a fresh brandy and soda.

"Are you a night owl like myself?" he asked, looking across the table.

Berwick nodded affirmatively over the rim of his glass.

"Then let's take a little ride."

"Which will cool a fellow off, eh? All right."

Sir Reginald and the detective left the club together and the lord called the first cab in sight.

A minute later they were bowling over the stones of London and by and by Berwick saw the lights of Fleet street and then the ones on London bridge.

It was a longer ride than the detective expected, for the cab turned into Piccadilly Circus; but at last the vehicle drew up before a house, the front door of which Sir Reginald opened with his latch key.

He let the ferret inside and to a parlor to the right of the hall and thence through it to a room of very small proportions.

Here he turned on the light and revealed a chamber elegantly furnished with a fine sideboard and all the other conveniences of a bachelor's home.

"This is my den," he said, turning to Berwick, whom he waved to a chair, "when I'm in town. You spoke about gems awhile ago. Now I want to show you something in that line."

Henlow went to one corner of the room where the pulling aside of a curtain revealed a safe set in solid masonry in the wall, and in another moment he was stooping in front of the door.

Presently he came back to his guest and held out his hands.

"Some family trifles," said he with a smile, as the detective bent forward for the purpose of inspecting the contents of his palm. "These are the jewels which poverty the most abject would not let me sell."

Sir Reginald spread the collection out on the table and Berwick inspected them with the eye of the eagerly curious.

"They're great," he said, looking suddenly up into Henlow's face. "What are they worth?"

"Oh, perhaps thirty thousand pounds—a nest egg, anyhow," and the speaker laughed.

"I wonder how they would compare with Lord Mascot's treasures?"

"I don't know."

"You say you never——"

At this moment there came to the ears of both men a cry that caused Sir Reginald to start back and suddenly bite his nether lip.

"It's that half-witted daughter of my housekeeper," he said, in explanation to his friend.

"I thought it was a woman's voice," responded the detective.

"Yes; the old lady will keep her here against my wishes, but as I can't get along without the mother, I must put up with the presence of the daughter."

Again the same sound came into the little room and Sir Reginald gathered up the gems and replaced them in the safe.

"This is positively annoying,," he said. "I did not fetch you here, Berwick, to discover that I have a private lunatic asylum on my hands. We'll go."

The safe was locked and the two men quitted the little room.

In the hall they encountered Mrs. Craigie, whose face told of trouble, but she halted the moment her eyes fell upon Berwick.

What she might have said was checked by Sir Reginald who went towards her quickly.

"Your daughter is a little excited tonight, eh, Harriet?" he said.

"My daughter!—oh, yes. She won't be still, but threatens to send for the perlice—"

"Well, see that she does, ha, ha!" laughed Sir Reginald, and in another second he and his companion had left the premises.

Donald Black returned to the club with his friend, but the voice in the house seemed to echo in his ears long afterward. What would he not given if he had suspected that the cry for help came from the throat of the heiress oif Mascot Hall, and that he was within rescuing distance of her? But he had other things to think about—Sir Reginald's gems, for instance.

CHAPTER XV.

ON VALERIE'S TRAIL.

After quitting Sir Reginald's house Donald Black did not return to the place where he had left young Masterson, but made his way to the office in Wellington street where he encountered Simpson who had sent the message informing him that Lady Valerie had come to London.

He found the official still on duty.

"You got my message?" inquired Simpson.

"Yes, all right."

"At which place?"

"At Berwick's."

"I sent two—hoping that one at least would find you."

"The young lady did not mention her business?"

"No, but her manner showed that it was she was subjected to fits of insanity——"

"Who told you I said so?"

"I heard you, madam."

"You?"

"Certainly. Come, we have come for the young lady upstairs—the lady brought here last night by Sir Reginald Henlow."

Mrs. Craigie drew back against the wall, and her long, dark fingers closed as if they had found some fair throat.

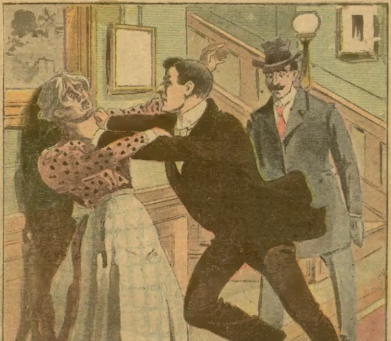
"I—I don't know such a person as Sir Reginald Henlow," she said, brazenly.

"You are his care-taker and jailer. You serve him with all your might. Come, don't keep us waiting."

"But you are in the wrong house. I am but a poor woman, innocent of all wrongdoing——"

"That's your story and it strongly needs confirmation," broke in the detective.

"You can search the house."



You aided the infernal scheme.

"Just what we will do, but you shall tell the truth. There is such a place as the police dock——"

"Not for a woman like me."

"Better women than you have graced it before now," cried the detective, seizing the woman's arm, to have his hold broken by a quick jerk.

"You are strangers to me and your demand to search the house for a young lady is preposterous."

"Take the keys, Masterson . She has them hanging to her waist."

As Masterson reached for the bunch Mrs. Craigie drew back and for a moment was entirely free.

Then she became defiant.

Her mien of innocence vanished like snow before the sun and she looked the tiger cat she was.

Her angular figure seemed to grow as it touched the wall and her face assumed an expression of rage hard to describe.

"This is my house and you are a pair of interlopers," she cried. "How do I know that you are not a pair of disguised Whitechapel thieves? You come here with a story which is made up for the purpose of getting through the house and carrying away my earnings and the goods of my employer. You can't beat me with a game of that kind. I am mistress here and you shall not search this house. There."

Her anger amused the detective, who looked at Masterson with a faint smile.

"You have no fear of the law, I see," said Black.

"You're pretty things to talk about the law," was the instant snap of the termagent. "I'll report both of you myself and will witness against you in open court."

"Never mind that, madam. You may be in the prisoner's dock before night, and—come Masterson. We'll ignore this bit of passion and see what's upstairs."

Donald Black sprang up the steps that led from the hall and the young man at his heels.

Mrs. Craigie looked after them, her face working

clinched.

It did not

through the house on th

from that part the detective thought the cry for help had come.

Room after room they found untenanted.

At last they reached a door which did not yield to any of the keys Masterson carried.

The game-keeper's son looked at the portal, which was quite stout, and drew back like an athlete.

In another moment he launched himself against the door and it fell from its hinges.

Donald Black sprang across the threshold and looked about him.

There was a crumpled couch, some turned-up carpet near the dresser, but no signs of a living tenant.

"What's this?" suddenly cried Masterson, diving half-way under the bed and drawing back with something in his hand.

"It is the girl's grip," exclaimed the detective. "It is like the one Simpson said she carried."

"It's a rare clew, anyway."

The rest of the apartments were searched, but without avail and a few moments later the detective and Masterson descended the stair and found Harriet Craigie snarling at them from the hall.

She was defiant as ever, not only so, but a look of infamous triumph beamed in her eyes.

"This belongs to the young lady," said Donald Black, holding out the little grip. "You need no longer tell us that you are the dove-like creature whose attributes your appearance belies. You are deep in the villainous plot against the girl, who is Lady Valerie of Mascot Hall."

A laugh welled from the woman's throat.

"We'll find her if we have to ransack all London!" cried Masterson.

"I wish you well," was the woman's answer.

"You know what has become of her. You know who took her away, for that she did not quit the house alone her grip bears witness. I command you, as one who enforces the law in a manner, to tell us what has become of Lady Valerie Mascot!"

Another laugh more triumphant than the first broke from the woman's throat.

She threw out her hands as if to emphasize her words and stepping back she exclaimed with her peculiar power:

"Ere this she is the wife of Sir Reginald Henlow! How does that suit you, my hearties?"

Max Masterson recoiled like one who receives a blow fair in the face.

An exclamation of mingled horror and rage broke from him and he suddenly threw himself upon the woman.

"You aided the infernal scheme!" he roared. "You, you witch of darkness! Valerie, the wife of that unprincipled rascal? No, no! It is not too late to balk that unholy union! But first I'll twist your neck, viper——"

"Here, boy; none of this just now. We have other work on hand," broke in Donald Black, and he pulled young Masterson from the creature whom he was already throttling.

"That is true, sir," said the youth. "Valerie first, vengeance afterward," and he turned away from Harriet Craigie and started for the door."

The woman heaped upon him a lot of epithets, but he heeded them not.

Valerie occupied his thoughts.

"Sir Reginald's wife?" he cried. "If that is true, she'll be widowed as soon as I can reach the scoundrel!"

Five minutes later Mrs. Craigie had the large house to herself.

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THE RO EXPRESS

STORY OF A MEMORABLE NIGHT ON THE RAIL

BY MARO O. ROLFE

Begun in No. 6, Feb. 24. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back numbers can be procured from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ON HONEYMAN'S RAFT.

It was to be a race with a deluge.

The Rocket Express had a little the better start. It was practically past the spot before the water came, but huge masses of the stone wall fell upon and crushed the freight car at the rear, and broke the coupling which held it to the engine, which had been put on as a pusher.

This settled the fate of Denton Marple and his fellow-prisoners, suddenly, terribly, and for all time.

The engine was not crippled, though the rear part of the tender was smashed.

This much was seen by the amateur astronomer from the window of the attic which he dignified by calling it his observatory, in the first minute after her had been startled by the report of the six cannon.

Then he dashed downstairs and down the hill and ran to and fro on the big raft, pounding and kicking on the doors of the houses and crying to their dazed occupants to flee from the wrath to come. Some of them were awake, but none of them had come out and few of them had any idea what had happened or that the efficacy of Ezekial Honeyman's oft-ridiculed scheme was immediately to be put to the test.

As soon as a current was established in the reservoir in the direction of the broken wall, the volume of water which poured over into the gulch increased with frightful rapidity.

A wall of water twenty feet high was rolling down behind the swift-moving train.

The excited residents of Floating City became spellbound when they realized the danger that was upon them.

Men and women stood, helpless, watching such a scene as men have gazed upon seldom since the world was peopled.

They did not try to escape. Perhaps they knew there was no time for that. They paid no heed to the men from the depot and a few others who sought safety with them on the raft; but at the command of the amateur astronomer they locked the few children there were among them in one of the houses.

They saw the two locomotives of the Rocket Express, the one that pulled and the one that pushed, leap forward like race-horses and go down the incline into the lower part of the gully at such a rate of speed as they had never seen any train attain to before, and right behind was that pursuing wall of water.

The volume of water that swept down the gully was twenty, then thirty, then more than forty feet high, as it was increased by the torrents from the reservoir.

They could see it coming on, in a great foam-capped mass almost perpendicular in front, a crude, resistless giant of destruction that would acknowledge no competition except in the matter of speed. The Rocket Express was actually holding its own in the race.

This much the amateur astronomer and some of his companions realized. Then they felt themselves thrown about and were made blind and breathless by the spray as the flood buffeted, then lifted Honeyman's raft and bore it away, with all upon it, pitching and tossing like a lifeboat in a tempest.

All about them was such a terrific roar of waters as a dozen Niagaras might have made, a hoarse, swelling song of infinite volume and infinite horror that deafened and benumbed and maddened.

Behind them they could see the ever heightening wall of waters, black and angry and white-crested, bending over toward them as if to suck them up, to hurl them about in its arms of foam and send them flying, limp and pulseless, into space.

Then they beheld it falling and spreading out against the walls of the gorge as if intent on surrounding them and crushing them; and again it drew itself together and rose and towered above them and threatened to fall on them and tear them limb from limb and grind them to impalpable fineness as only water can grind rocks of flint.

The water had not yet flowed over the raft, and men and women whose hair was growing white literally in seconds, as time is measured, in ages as they measured it by their experience of terror and of despair, thanked God for that; as, clinging to their mean houses which Ezekial Honeyman had anchored firmly to the raft, they held their hands over their mouths and pinched their nostrils to keep from being strangled by the spray.

Somehow they looked upon the amateur astronomer as a being of supernatural power. Many of them were ignorant and superstitious, and, though they had derided him, they had half believed in him and had been made very cowardly by his numerous and vehement predictions of evil.

Now they outstretched their hands toward him and besought him to save them from these terrors, the beginning of which had been made more impressive by his dismal voice raised in prophecy and in weird pleading that they would rise and flee from from doom that was literally falling upon them.

He was strangely calm.

"Hang onto somethin' with a good clutch an' never let go even if yer arms break. The Lord loves a man or a woman with a good grip. It's awful tribulation on the raft, my friends, but when yer inclined to weaken, bear in mind that its full jest over the side."

The few who heard him obeyed him. The instinct of self-preservation impelled the others to tighten their grasp on whatever they held to. These precautions were well taken, for the next instant the raft almost stood on end.

CHAPTER XXX.

AT SUNRISE.

Now for one awful moment they could see the Rocket Express and it was still in advance of the on-rushing wall of water, with a thousand feet of dry ground behind it.

The men on the train understood what had brought the catastrophe on the raft. There had been a suddden narrowing of the gorge. The advance of the waters had been checked in a measure. The column had nearly doubled in height. The force from the rear had pushed the raft over its brink.

They shuddered as they realized what would be the result should the plunging end of the huge raft come crashing down to the ground. When the water, pressing it from behind, would completely overturn it, submerge its habitations, roofs down, and destroy every living thing upon it.

But the stupendous pressure of the water underneath saved it. Sustained by the gradually augmenting undercurrent, it rose by degrees to a nearly level position in which the upleaping stream and the spray and mist on the verge of the wall of water, shut off from those upon it even a glimpse of the flying train.

Groping here and there, with his face almost down to the surface of the raft, the amateur astronomer mingled with every group of men and women and found every isolated individual and drove them all into the houses, where they locked themselves in and clung desperately to the frames of doors and windows.

Hé alone remained outside, the only witness in Floating City of the scenes that followed.

Floating City was now literally floating.

In a way the wisdom of Ezekial Honeyman had been justified. But there still remained the question why any one should have wanted to live in that gully beneath the reservoir, even under the most advantageous circumstances and with the best facilities for escaping in time of calamity.

If this question presented itself to the unreasoning beings in the little houses on the rafts at this time it was only as the fragment of a dream might have done, as a vague, flitting notion not of the first importance in this moment of mortal peril.

The vital question was not as to why they had permitted themselves to become subjected to this danger, but as to whether they would get through it alive.

Outside, the amateur astronomer clung to a post that was fixed firmly in the raft and watched everything that transpired with an unnatural calmness.

Once in a while he caught glimpses of the Rocket Express and noted with satisfaction that it was still ahead of the flood. But he noted, too, that the advancing wall of water was gaining on the train.

He saw that the engine that went in advance, the one in charge of Stuart and Burd, was gradually slackening speed and that the distance between it and the engine that was pulling the train was lessening instant by instant. Every fleeting glance of the train showed the two engines nearer together.

He saw Burd standing at the rear of the tender of the locomotive ahead, holding the end of a heavy cable in his hand. Burd cast it over on the track, and, as it straightened out and the other locomotive approached, a man who clung to the cow-catcher of the engine that drew the Rocket Express dropped the looped end of the cable over an immense hook in the projecting framework.

Then the stolen locomotive darted ahead, the cable straightened and the train moved forward under the combined force of three engines, two of which were pulling and one of which was pushing.

The passengers were slow to understand their peril and many of them did not comprehend it until it was over. Most of them sat, half benumbed by a fear no less terrible than vague cowering in their seats and hanging on to the arms of them and to the backs of those in front, listening dumbly to Mainhall and Fincastle as the two hastened through the coaches, crying:

"Don't be alarmed! There is no danger! Nothing, whatever, is the matter that can affect us. Don't leave your seats!"

There can be no doubt that their coolness saved many lives. A panic in those closely crowded coaches would have ended in the trampling to death of all who were too weak to save their lives by physical strength. The result would have been a survival of the strong and of the strong only.

The few who had more than an indistinct notion of the doom which impended over them were somewhat reassured by this justifiable and, under the circumstances, even admirable display of bravado and mendacity.

It was not four minutes after the precipitation of the catastrophe by the firing of the six cannon before the danger to the Rocket Express was in a great measure over. The water ran out of the reservoir down to the level of the breach in the wall and after that the overflow practically ceased. The train descended into the valley in advance of the now gradually lessening and lowering volume of water, and then ran up grade to higher ground, where it stopped short, alongside a convenient switch, not a soul on board injured, the train itself was intact, except for the loss of the prison car of Marple and his men.

Far in the distance the passengers, now permitted to swarm out through doors that had but just now been guarded sternly to prevent the egress of any of them, saw Floating City grounded on the bottom land at one side of the valley, and presenting the appearance of a small island.

The water which flowed round it was subsiding slowly but surely, and losing itself in the small high-banked river which ran through the valley and afforded safe and ample drainage to a larger river beyond.

"It is eleven minutes since the flood came upon us," said Fincastle, as he consulted his watch.

The sun was just rising into view.

CHAPTER XXXI.

TOO FRANK BY HALF.

Fincastle, De Lisle, Mainhall, and Burd who had come back from the pilot locomotive, formed a group apart from the passengers.

They were shaking hands.

"Safe!" cried the superintendent. "Safe at last!"

"You got off pretty well," said Mainhall, quietly.

"I don't understand how we could have got it in much worse shape," replied Fincastle.

"Nor I," said De Lisle.

"Nor I, either," chi[illegible] in Jim Burd.

"You might have go[illegible] mixed up with a cyclone," went on Mainhall, drawlingly. "I wouldn't engage to see you through anything like that."

"But you've be[illegible] fair and square and served us well in this peril and trouble, Mr. Mainhall," exclaimed Fincastle. "De Lisle and Burd can both bear witness to that."

"I,'" said De Lisle, "intimated that you were only an adventurer, card player and not much likely to be good for anything else. If your gambler's nerve made you stick to this game it wasn't a bad thing for the P. Q. & M. S. railway after all. Mr. Mainhall, I congratulate you on what you have done and regret that I made those unpleasant remarks last night."

"Oh, I don't blame you. Appearances were against me. I did gamble in New York, and my game was as crooked as any that was going. But now, gentlemen, all that is in the past. I shall not have to depend on pegging cards for a livelihood hereafter."

"No," said Fincastle, "if you want to reform I will see that you have a good position with our road."

"I was not speaking of reformation—men of my type seldom reform—but of my changed fortunes."

"He means the two thousand," suggested Burd, to whom such a sum seemed considerable. "That two thousand'll set him up in good shape."

Mainhall laughed, not mirthfully, but rather disagreeably.

"Oh, no," he said, glibly, "I couldn't give up gaming for that. If I had no more, I would lose that or win more with it before tomorrow morning. But now I shall be a man of wealth."

"I do not understand," said Fincastle.

"Wel', my name is not Ellis Mainhall, nor is it Sigsbee Seacord, as Mr. De Lisle knew me in New York. Denton Marple was not the real name of that man who was drowned like a rat in the freight car which broke off from the train, but that man was my half-brother, and he was rich and I am his only heir and——"

"But," interrupted Fincastle, "he denounced you as a traitor. You surely do not expect—was he so forgiving then? It is hard to believe."

"He did not suspect my treason till we met on the embankment, when you put up that good gun fight, Mr. Fincastle. He never would have forgiven me, and I knew then I had to fight it out. So I stuck to you. Now that he is dead, I shall make the best of my bereavement."

"Ah! Now I know that Denton Marple was your half brother, I understand why he would not shoot you when you gave him a chance," commented Fincastle.

"He would have shot me," answered Mainhall, dryly, "had I not thrown myself on his mercy. He would have shot me, anyway, if he had believed he would die without an opportunity to disinherit me. You see you didn't know him and his peculiarities. I did. Work and I have been having a nasty quarrel since I was a boy. I don't want work, so with sincere thanks, I decline the position you offered me, Mr. Fincastle. I'm going to have for the taking what men like you work for—money."

He paused a moment and did not appear at all ill at ease when he saw depicted on their faces their disgust with him and with his plain avowal of his heartless nature.

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This wonderful table or desk world stands 13 inches high. It is 8½ inches in diameter and about 25 inches in circumference. It has wooden base and upright. It is fastened on a pivot so it can be revolved or placed at any angle desired. The oceans are shown in pale blue, the countries in red, green and yellow. Mountain ranges, rivers, cities, ports and islands are all clearly shown, as well as the capes, bays and harbors. It is a great article to have in the home. Every family should have one. It is instructive and interesting. OUR FREE OFFER: In order that every reader of this paper may get this WORLD FREE, we will send it, all charges prepaid, to every one who sends us 10 cents in stamps or silver for a three months' subscription to Boyce's Monthly. We believe we can introduce our great monthly in thousands of homes in this way. When you see the choice reading and splendid premiums we know you will want the paper regularly. Boyce's Monthly has from 16 to 24 pages every issue. Remember that we give the world free, the 10 cents merely pays for a three months' subscription. Address,

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he continued, "but it has helped me to be right merry and has usually made its goodby a jolly one, and I have sped my departing guest and mourned his absence sincerely. It now devolves upon me to mourn the departure of my half-brother and to give his wealth as cheerful a welcome as I may. I shall keep the two thousand and shall not go with you further. I am going to stay here and reclaim my half-brother's body. I shall have to do that, you know, to establish the fact of his death. Goodby, gentlemen."

He was too tactful to offer his hand at parting. Neither of them would have taken it.

"Ugh!" grunted Fincastle as Mainhall walked away. "How a rogue like that can fool an honest man. His half-brother made the mistake of his life when he refused to shoot him."

"Undoubtedly," answered De Lisle, "but if Marple had shot Mainhall, who would have saved the Rocket Express?"

"De Lisle," and Fincastle laid his hand on the shoulder of the secret agent, "I'm not certain about Mainhall's sincerity from the first. I believe his treason to his half-brother consisted in his putting up a plan to rob the express car on his own account. He tried to bring about a collision of engines that would have killed Marple and which Marple prevented by having my daughter on board. He pointed Marple out to me when he thought I would not hesitate to shoot him. After Marple was a prisoner, he urged me to make it impossible for him to escape. I think he was trying to serve his own interests."

"But," argued De Lisle, "he stuck to you to the end."

"He knew that the arrival of your fifty armed detectives cut off his last chance. His game was up and it was all up between him and Marple. He could do nothing better than to get solid with me. But Marple's death made that unnecessary. To Mainhall it was a lucky accident, the least probable of several possible outcomes of a desperate game. After all that had gone before, it was, from his point of view, the best thing that could have happened for him. So you see Mainhall as he is—villainous, heartless and remorseless, a hypocrite who would pretend to anything and stop at nothing. But——"

"Look!" broke in De Lisle. "There's a red flannel shirt flying from a pole on that big raft. That is an appeal for help."

"Yes," answered Fincastle, "we must do something for those people."

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE PRESIDENT'S SPECIAL.

Fincastle consulted Engineer Hunt and Fireman Burd and decided to send the engine that had been used as a pusher in escaping from the overflow of the ruined reservoir, back toward the new site of Floating City as far as it could go without taking water into its firebox. Fincastle and De Lisle were to go with it.

The flood was subsiding rapidly, and they had no difficulty in running the locomotive near the gigantic mass of timbers on the which the houses stood.

The amateur astronomer and two other men came out to the locomotive on a small, hastily improvised raft, which they had no difficulty in "poling" through the shallow water which flowed between the railroad embankment and Floating City.

"Will your train take these people up the line a ways?" asked the old man. "They can't live here. Tomorrow they'll have money, for I'm giving 'em a hundred dollars apiece for their houses and complete ownership of the foundation on which they was built and they'll get it without the slightest inauguration whatever. You see, inauguration is a sighingtific term. That'll set 'em up som'er's else, whar they'll have corn, 'taters an' onions. Nothin' like a garden spot. It puts a man in sympathy with the earth."

"We'll do anything we can for them," answered Fincastle, "if you can get them out to the line. We'll help them into vacant houses in some of the villages above and tomorrow we'll have some freight train stop and bring up their household goods."

"We can bring 'em out on the raft," replied the amateur astronomer. "You jest git any kind of a car and come back here."

One of the coaches was attached to the engine, and by the time a dozen trips of the raft had been made, a demoralized and despondent lot of men, women and children had staggered into it and had fallen nerveless, speechless, almost lifeless upon its seats.

The amateur astronomer was the only one except the Floating City agent and operator who had nerve enough to stand out on the rear platform with Fincastle and De Lisle.

"See thar!" he exclaimed, as the coach was drawn rapidly up the grade toward the Rocket Express. "Thar's yer depot, tipped over on the side and busted out of any kind o' use. I s'pose you'll have to build another."

"Not at Floating City," answered Fincastle, decisively. "We'll never have a station there again. These boys who so nearly lost their lives there in our service will be given good jobs elsewhere on the line."

"But you could use thousands an' thousands o' feet o' beautiful walnut an' pine an' oak in yer car shops, couldn't you? I mean great big, long timbers and wide planks an' elegant panel lumber without a gnarl or a knot," he added, enthusiastically.

"Well, we could if we could get it," replied Fincastle. "It's pretty hard to get such lumber nowadays."

"Well, I've got it, an' got a lot of it. Nobody but me ever took the trouble to see what kind o' stuff 'Zekial Honeyman put into that big raft so many years ago that most o' the folks round about never see anything but the dirt on it where it wasn't covered up with willows. I've know'd a long time 'twas worth a good deal of money, but I didn't see my way clear to buy it till this mornin'. Now I'm sole proprietor by virchoo o' this here contract," and he produced a crumpled paper sufficient unto the law, "by virchoo of this an' one dollar paid in hand to each party of the fore part—that's a sighingtific legal term. Go back with me an' look at the lumber after you land the passengers," suggested the old man in a voice that shook with eagerness.

"I'll do it." And after he had inspected the big raft, Fincastle said calculatingly:

"Well, my thrifty friend, you've got ten to fifteen thousand dollars worth of good lumber there and we'll be glad to buy it."

"A small fortune!" cried the amateur astronomer. "Yet folks say sighingtific people don't have no practical ideas. Well, I'll be squantipuckered if I ain't hung on to a blamed good one for some years. Now, I reckon I can git one of them big brass horhorscopes like I seen at the fair an' I cal'clate the star spangled rosy berg album and grand celestial milk belt won't be hidin' no more secrets from me. I'm goin' to penetrate the mysteries of the nibulary hypothesis."

"Only a man of wealth can afford language like that," said De Lisle.

"Well," replied the old man, proudly, "them's sighingtific terms, an' I'll soon be a man of wealth."

"Look up the line!" cried Fincastle, "there comes locomotive one hundred and one with President Latshaw's special car. Of course he came down by way of the W. H. & C. Short Line and the old T. H. & S. T. track that we're going to use on the way up. Hunt's letting him in on the switch now."

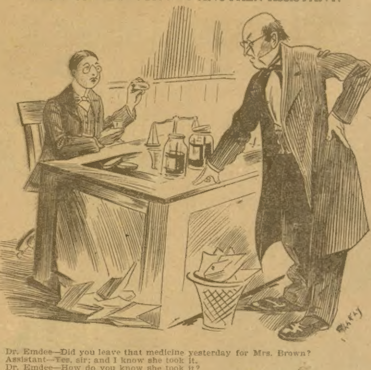
When Oliver Latshaw had listened to all that Fincastle and De Lisle had to relate and commented on the situation, he added:

"That story of Mainhall's about Marple's love and revenge is a falsehood told Fincastle to induce him to kill Marple. Marple was never infatuated with Kate Amber. For several years before and for several years after her death, he was in the penitentiary for train robbery. Of this fact I was informed by Hawxley just before I left town. He has everything down fine. This whole scheme for destroying the Rocket Express was a robber's game pure and simple, and Mainhall had his own game on the side."

The report of Hawxley to De Lisle exposed Mainhall's plot in detail. Though Mainhall escaped, and is known at Monte Carlo as "that lucky American," Marple's gang was broken up and some of its members were punished. It transpired that Marple's pre-arranged signal to the gunners was nothing more than the passage of the engine up the line in advance of the Rocket Express The over-caution which impelled Fincastle and Mainhall to send the engine up in that way precipitated the catastrophe.

(The end.)

NOW THE DOCTOR HAS ANOTHER ASSISTANT.



Dr. Emdee—Did you leave that medicine yesterday for Mrs. Brown?
Assistant—Yes, sir; and I know she took it.
Dr. Emdee—How do you know she took it?
Assistant—Saw a crape on her door as I came by this morning.

HAPPY FAMILY,

When They Got Rid of the Coffee Habit.

A little woman out in Oswego, Ills., tells about her husband having determined to see if he could not make her quit coffee drinking, which he believed to be the cause of her constant neuralgia and general nervousness, brought home several packages of Postum Food Coffee which he had discovered, by trying elsewhere, to be good.

She says: "What in the world he brought home five packages for, I could not understand; nevertheless I quit coffee and started in on Postum Food Coffee. I did not have much faith in the change doing me any good, but was astonished to discover that my neuralgia left me almost at once, and the nervous troubles kept getting less and less.

"Little daughter at that time had been ill and could eat little or nothing. She was pale and thin. As soon as I discovered how Postum treated me, I began to give it to her. She liked it very much, and would drink it when she would take nothing else. She began to pick up rapidly and got plump and round and rosy.

"I don't care what sort of food there is in Postum so long as it treats me as it has. It is plain enough the food contained in Postum Coffee is good, and that's all we want to know. I am rid of neuralgia and nervousness, and am a healthy woman. Husband has also been improved, and daughter is well and happy, as I stated above." With best wishes, Mrs. Nellie Treman.

◆

A scientist says that shutting the eyes makes the sense of hearing more acute. This may account for the many closed eyes seen in the churches every Sunday.

Finds His Mother Gone, His Family Scattered.

A few days ago a man of apparently fifty years got off the cars at Arcola, Ill., and throwing his grip into a hack at the station, asked to be taken to the house of Mrs. Tay.

"Tay, Tay?" said the lad who was driving. "Don't know any such person."

The man thought a minute. "Take me to Henry Timm," he said.

A few minutes later he was looking into the eyes of a man of his own age. Neither recognized the other at first.

"My God!" said the stranger at last. "I believe you are Henry Timm. But how old you look. Where's my mother. I'm Peter Tay. Where is she?"

"Peter!" cried Timm. "My old schoolmate! Everybody thought you were dead long ago. Your mother she—she——"

"You don't mean—she's dead! Dead, and I never came home to see her! Curse my pig-headed folly! But I loved her, Henry, and never forgot her; always meant to come home some day, and——"

The man visibly drooped. His homecoming was a tame affair; so different from the fabric of his dreams.

Little by little Timm drew from him his remarkable story.

Tay left home because of a quarrel with his father and went away west. In California, where he won and lost several "piles," he finally took root as a prosperous man in Sacramento, rich in dividend-paying mining stock.

Mrs. Tay died six years ago. Her comfortable fortune of $15,000 was divided equally between the other two children. Peter Tay was mourned as dead.

◆

He Wasn't "Fair to Women."

Nineteen years ago James Hall escaped from the Muscogee county, Ga., convict camp. The other day a man whom the authorities claimed as James Hall, was taken to Atlanta, and lodged in jail.

Hall, if it is he, was given up by his own sister-in-law in Alabama.

"Yes, I knew where he was," she says, "and I told the officers. Why? Because it was right.

"When Jim Hall ran away after serving nine years of his sentence in that hell-on-earth of a prison camp I was glad of it. He had suffered enough and I reckoned he'd be a better man. But he wasn't. He lived mean. He married five different women right in this state and he ought to be shut up. I told on him because he wasn't fair to women."

James A. Hall admits that his is the name on the warrant, but he denies that he is the man who escaped from the Georgia convict camp.

"I don't know why they should have arrested me," says Hall, "unless it is on account of my name."

When asked about the report that it was his sister-in-law who surrendered him to the officers because of his alleged several wives, Hall said:

"There must be some mistake. I have only been married twice, and my first wife is dead. My present wife was a Miss Mary Booth of Goethite, Alabama, and I married her on Sept. 7, 1889. I have never had even a quarrel with my sister-in-law, and am at a loss to account for the report but she believes me a bigamist."

◆

Civilization.

"You are scarcely half civilized!" we said, reproachfully.

The natives burst into tears.

"Pity our misfortune!" they cried. "For our gold mines yield only low-grade ore!"

Then they turned their streaming eyes toward the hills, whence a mere handful of Anglo-Saxons were shelling them perfunctorily.

◆

"Knock 'Em Down With a Club"

Mallards, Pintails, Bluebills and Teal are plentiful on the Kankakee marsh, on the Monon Route. Get tickets to Shelby at City Ticket Office, 232 Clark St.

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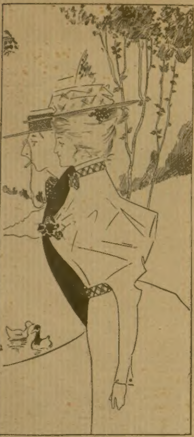
A Thoughtful Father.



Gerald—My father left all his money to a school for idiots.

Geraldine—Thought of you to the last, didn't he?

To Women Who Dread Motherhood

Information How They May Give Birth to Happy, Healthy Children Absolutely Without Pain—Sent Free.

No woman need any longer dread the pains of childbirth. Dr. J. H. Dye gave up his life to relieving the sorrows of women. He proved that all pain at childbirth may be entirely banished, and he will gladly tell you how it may be done absolutely free of charge. Send your name and address to Dr. J. H. Dye, Box 137, Buffalo, N. Y., and he will send you postpaid, his wonderful book which tells how to give birth to happy, healthy children, absolutely without pain. It will cost you not a single cent to accept his magnanimous offer, so do not delay but write today.

Incredible.

Hungry Higgins—Here's a funny story in the paper about a guy that planted a gallon of booze when he left home, an' come back home twenty years after an' dug it up.

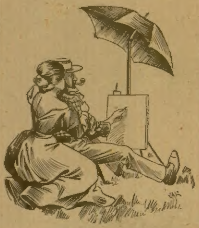
Weary Watkins—That story ain't nothin' but a lie. He couldn't never of stayed away that long.

Needed Help.

"Mrs. Murphy, how can you let your ol child beat the others so?"

"D'ye think a harrd wurrukin' woman has toime to beat thim tin children iverry day? I thry me hand at the oldest wan iverry marning an' he's a good, sthrong b'y, an' beats the other nine fer me!"

A Disagreement.



She—How is it that more men paint than women?"

He (cynically)—They don't.

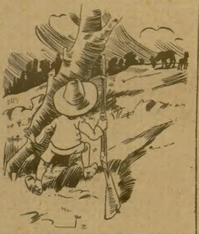
Discovered by a Woman.

I have discovered a positive cure for all female diseases and the piles. It never fails to cure any of the various diseases peculiar to women, such as leucorrhœa, displacements, ulceration, granulation, etc., or the piles from any cause or either sex. I will gladly mail a box of this wonderful medicine free to every sufferer. Mrs. C. B. MILLER, Box 108, Kokomo, Ind

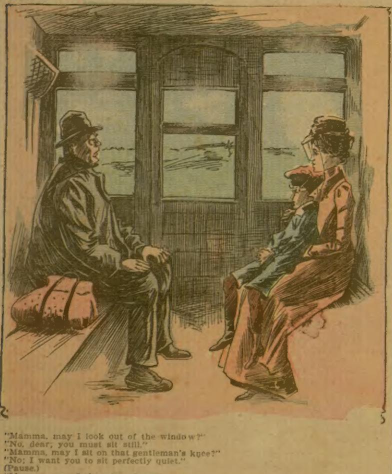
A Doubtful Compliment.

Mamma—Aunt Ella thinks you are a nice little boy.

Dick—I hope she don't mean I'm a sissy.



"OUT FOR THE DOE."



"Mamma, may I look out of the window?"

"No, dear; you must sit still."

"Mamma, may I sit on that gentleman's knee?"

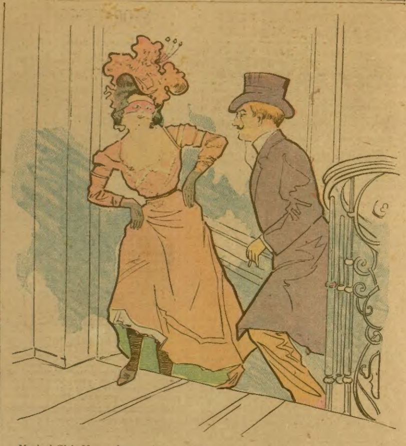
"No; I want you to sit perfectly quiet."

(Pause.)

"Mamma, may I sit on the floor?"

"I have told you twice that I want you to sit just where you are, and I mean what I say."

"Mamma, may I grow?"



Masked Girl—If you dare to kiss me I shall slap your face.

Bold Admirer—All right; slap me if you like.

Masked Girl—Oh, but not until you have kissed me.

Applause.

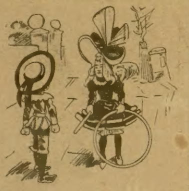
Sitting there in the deep shadows of the box, Kathryn found herself unexpectedly moved by the story of great love which was being set forth on the stage.

"Ah, me," she sighed, ever and anon, with quivering lip.

When the denouement came, she forgot herself quite, and stamped her feet and whistled, whereas it had been her resolve to applaud thus no more, but to cry "Bravo," as they do in New York.

For Kathryn was not so intense a Chicago girl as not to aspire to better things.

Not Far Out.



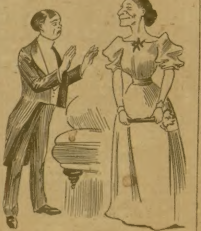
He—I wonder what makes ma so happy today; she's been singing about the house all the morning.

She—Dessay she's found something fresh to scold pa for when he comes home tonight!

Do You Want a Buggy?

If you have any use for a fine open or top buggy, surrey, phæton or spring wagon at the lowest price ever heard of, a price that will surprise you, privilege of free trial and payable after received, cut this notice out and mail to SEARS, ROEBUCK & Co., Chicago, Ill., and they will mail you their very latest and extremely interesting vehicle offer and special catalogue.

Worth a Victoria Cross.



"Now, don't deny it, Mr. Softchap—you're trying to lure me on to kiss you! You wild, wicked, rakish young men are all alike—and I suppose I must yield with a good grace!"

Perils of the Sea.

"Yes," said the lady who had been shipwrecked, "we suffered terrible hardships. We drifted for two weeks in an open boat, and I lost my pocket mirror the first day."

Would Bring Them All.

"I can't pay that bill now."

"If you don't I'll tell all your other creditors that you have paid it."

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OUR SPECIAL 90-DAY OFFER, which is apart from the above: Send us your name and address (no money); we will send you 20 wicks, postpaid; sell them at 5 cts. each and remit us $1, and we will mail to your address, *free*, a Beautiful Gold Plated WATCH-CHAIN AND CHARM, also a Handsome Gold Finished Ring.

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Selling the Robinson Thermal Bath Cabinet. Only Cabinet Patented, and Guaranteed The Best. One agent made $300 last month, others making $200. We want an agent in every town. Exclusive territory given. Very liberal terms. Write quick as territory is being taken rapidly.
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Men or Women to represent us in their own state. Your duties to take charge of solicitors and attend to collections. No investment required. Send stamp for application blank. CO-OPERATIVE CO., 390 Star Bldg., Chicago, Ill.
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$3 a Day Sure Send us your address and we will show you how to make $3 a day absolutely sure; we furnish the work and teach you free; you work in the locality where you live. Send us your address and we will explain the business fully; remember we guarantee a clear profit of $3 for every day's work, absolutely sure, write at once. ROYAL MANUFACTURING CO., Box 2, DETROIT, MICH.
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MONEY MAKER For AGENTS Our ALL METAL, NEW STYLE BREAD and PASTRY BOARD is perfect. No scouring. Dough don't stick to it, and it has 20 other advantages over all others. Every housewife needs one. Sells at sight. Write quick for territory, terms and model. METALLIC BREAD BOARD CO., Cambridge, Ohio.
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WANTED MAN with horse and buggy to sell Pasture Stock Food. Salary $15 per week and 10 per cent on all sales. Farmer preferred. Previous experience not essential. Pasture Stock Food is the greatest discovery ever made in practical and scientific feeding, and is sold on an absolute guarantee. Steady, permanent trade, easily established. Sample bag, sufficient for two weeks' feeding, free. Send 25 cents in stamps or silver to cover express charges. PASTURE STOCK FOOD COMPANY, 312 Boyce Bldg., CHICAGO
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GET BIG MAIL Would you like to get a lot of letters, circulars and packages? If so, read this advertisement very carefully. You probably know that manufacturers, supply houses, wholesalers and publishers buy names and addresses for the purpose of sending samples, advertising matter, papers and circulars to. Good names and addresses are hard to get and are quite expensive. We publish an Agent's Directory List containing names and addresses carefully arranged in alphabetical order. We send these Directory Lists to concerns we know are anxious for good names to send advertising matter to. The cost of arranging these names in suitable shape and taking care of them is considerable yet we only ask 10 cents in silver for our trouble. Write your name very plainly so the printer will not make a mistake; be sure to give your street number and town also plainly written so that any mail addressed to you will reach you without fail. Simply enclose 10 cents with your name and address as above stated saying you wish your name inserted in our Agents Directory List and we will insert it in the next Directory which we are now preparing. Address AGENTS DIRECTORY LIST, Indiana, Indiana County, Pa.
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FREE Anyone can easily earn a Watch Chain and Charm, gold plated, nickel, or Silver Watch, Ring and a 56-piece Tea Set, by selling our celebrated Perfume. You can get the above named presents absolutely free if you comply with the offer we send to everyone taking advantage of this advertisement. Send your name and address (no money) and we will send you 12 packages of Perfume to sell at 10c. each; when sold send us the $1.20 and we will send you a Watch-Chain and Charm, a beautiful Gold Finished Ring and our 56 piece Tea Set offer. Presents shipped the same day money is received. GLOBE PERFUME CO., 65 Court St., Dept. BW, Brooklyn, N. Y.
When Writing Mention The Chicago Ledger.

STORYETTES.

The Care of Babies.

So many conflicting rules have been printed about the care of babies that something ought to be done at once to set mothers on the right track. Obtain first a normal healthy baby. Go to a first-class department store, if other avenues fail. Diet with a baby is the main thing. For breakfast, say a few griddle cakes with a couple of hard-boiled eggs. For luncheon, any meat and vegetable with apple dumplings, and a rousing cup of coffee to top off with. For dinner—always give the baby his heaviest meal just before retiring—a thick soup, a fish, an entree, a roast and cold bottle, and any good wholesome dessert, say, deep dish apple pie.

Should the baby be restless in the night, don't take him up. This is a mistake made so often by erring mothers, who think they know it all. Science knows better. He cannot cry too much. Should he make too much noise and keep the household awake, tie a towel over his face and lock him up in a distant room. Above all things, never give in.

Few people understand how to give the baby his bath—which is really quite simple. Fill the tub with water and always use a bath thermometer. If after ten minutes' immersion the thermometer registers below zero, you may then know that the water is a trifle too cold. Great care should be taken not to let the baby take cold, so the bath should be given as rapidly as possible. Strip the baby and take him by the heels and souse him in head first, then swing him back and forth through the water ten or fifteen times, slapping him vigorously to insure a good circulation. Lay him on the floor and rub him vigorously with a tin nutmeg grater, and then put him to bed in a warm room, with a buffalo robe over him and about two additional feet of California blankets.

When this is done leave him to rest for twenty-four hours.

He will need the rest.

◆

The Same Effect.

"It is very odd," remarked Mr. Hubbub, "that in Africa there is a tribe which cannot wear clothes at all. Clothes make them sick. Isn't it strange, dear?"

"Not at all," replied Mrs. Hubbub. "The same thing happens in this country also."

"Oh, surely not. I never heard of such a thing in civilized countries."

"Well, Mr. Hubbub, I can tell you that even in this great and glorious land the same phenomenon is by no means unknown. When I see Mrs. Poindexter coming out every month or so with a fine new outfit from head to foot, her clothes make me sick—make me sick, I say, Mr. Hubbub—when I reflect that you are just as able to buy me new clothes as Mr. Poindexter is to buy them for his wife, and don't."

And Mrs. Hubbub dissolved in tears.

◆

Right in His Line.

Author—I've written this play to shock every one in the country. The critics said it out-Saphoed "Sapho," was worse than all the other French farces rolled into one. The clergy have denounced it, people invariably come to see it disgusted, and I thought I had succeeded in turning out the most disgraceful piece of stage work possible. Yet there's a man who has sat through the worst two acts of it without a shudder of disgust and says he doesn't think it's so very terrible. Who is he—some confirmed roue?

Manager—No; he's the collector of garbage for the city.

◆

Not Needed.

American Statesman (to Porto Rican)—The arrangement is altogether for your benefit. You will not have to pay any duty on the goods we send to you. Consequently you will get them cheap. And we only put enough tariff on your products to keep them from coming into ruinous competition with the products of our own manufactories. Don't you see?

Porto Rican—But how about our manufactories?

American Statesman—Oh, you won't have any. They're already petering out.

◆

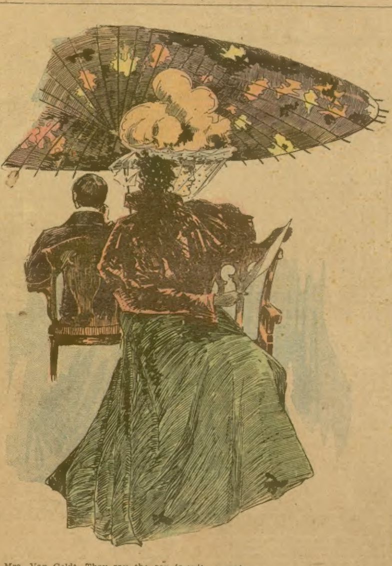
Unworthy.

Kid, the Shoye—I t'ought Jedge Hamstring wus a frien' o' ours.

The Ward Leader—Well?

Kid—He's held Skinny fer repeatin'.

The Ward Leader—Not for repeating, young man. As a warning. The Kid only got in seven votes.



Mrs. Van Geldt—They say the son is quite a genius.
Mr. Van Geldt—Oh, no; he's not as crazy as that.

AGENTS WANTED

OUR AGENTS RIDE IN CARRIAGES

More Money can be Made Working for Us than at any other Legitimate Business in America to-day and we furnish
HORSELESS CARRIAGE FREE!
We want immediately responsible, live, wide-awake representatives in each county of every State in the Union to show our line of staple household goods and help advertise them; we offer unparalleled inducements in the way of compensation for services. Our goods are not to be peddled from house to house but orders are taken by showing our handsome large plate book accurately illustrating the goods. No capital is required and you should be able to make at least $90.00 PER MONTH with little effort on your part as our goods sell themselves. If you prefer to work on a salary you can do so and we will pay according to your ability; we will guarantee to establish you in a life business if you will engage with us at once. In addition to large commissions—more than paid by other concerns—we propose to furnish our representatives, Free of Cost, with a Horseless Carriage; the carriage we propose to furnish is the New England Motor Carriage, Salesrooms, 116 Bedford St., Boston. This carriage has no equal on the world's market, costs $750.00, weighs about 750 lbs., simple in construction, odorless, and almost noiseless, operated by steam under perfect control, can be run for one cent a mile and by anybody with ease, rate of speed limited only by character of the road. The horseless carriage is designed to revolutionize methods of travel and it should be an added pleasure to be the first owner of one of these wonder vehicles in your locality. Let us hear from you at once before all valuable territory is taken, stating where you desire to work; we want no boys or girls or representatives in large cities. Address:
STANDARD DISTRIBUTING COMP'Y, 69 Pearl Street, Boston, Mass.
When Writing Mention The Chicago Ledger.

FREE Any one can easily earn a 56-piece Tea Set, Watch, Camera, Gold-Plated Ring, Lace Curtains, and many other presents, selling Dr. Thompson's Cough Tablets, the greatest cough and cold cure known, at 25 cents per box. Send address (no money) and we will send 4 boxes. When sold, send us $1 received, and we send you present, according to our premium list we send with goods. We trust you and take back what you cannot sell. GOLDEN REMEDY CO., 25 Warren St., New York City.
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CLEARING SALE
6000 new '99 model Bicycles carried over must be SACRIFICED AT ONCE. $11.75
SECOND-HAND wheels, good as new, over 50 makes and models $3 TO $10
Swell 1900 Models, HIGHEST GRADE GUARANTEED. $11 TO $20
WE SHIP TO ANY ONE ON APPROVAL AND TRIAL BEFORE PAYMENT.
One RIDER AGENT in each town can obtain FREE USE of sample wheel to ride and exhibit. Write for ART CATALOGUE, BARGAIN LIST AND OUR SPECIAL OFFER.
MEAD CYCLE CO, Dept. 14F Chicago.
When Writing Mention The Chicago Ledger.

$18 to $35 WEEKLY and EXPENSES MEN and WOMEN At Home or Traveling.
Mr. Smith, of Ind., made $827.50 first 6 months. Albert Hill, of N. J., $228 first month. Mr. Muney, of Texas, $12.50 first 2 hours. Carrie Williams, clerk, $144 in 6 weeks. Mrs. Hitchcox, $222, besides housekeeping. Lida Kennedy, $84 while teaching. LET US START YOU—No experience needed. Our Agents made over $47,000 00 last month supplying the enormous demand for our famous Quaker Bath Cabinet, and appointing agents. Wonderful seller. Everybody buys—business men, families and physicians. No scheme, fraud or fake methods. Write today for our Proposition, New Plan, etc. Free. World Mfg. Co., 47 World B'ld'g, Cincinnati, O.
[*We recommend above firm as reliable.—Editor.*]
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FREE Watches, Rings, Chains, Etc.,
FREE as a grand premium. Any one can earn this Beautiful Gold-Plated Hunting Case Stem Wind Watch, lady's or gent's size, a perfect time-keeper, by selling our Jewelry Novelties, among friends and neighbors at 10cts. each. OUR 90-DAY OFFER, which is apart from the above: Send us your name and address and we will send you 30 of our assorted stick and scarf pins, studs, etc (postpaid). You sell them at 10 cents each, remit us the $3 and we will send you Free, a Beautiful Watch and Chain and Charm. Address Consolidated Jewelry Co., Dept. B W Bridgeport, Conn.
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YOU CAN EASILY EARN bicycles, sewing machines, house furnishings, ladies' or gentlemen's watches, cameras, mandolins, guitars, violins, silverware, dinner sets, guns, and your choice of a hundred other articles, all guaranteed. Simply introduce a few boxes of our unexcelled toilet soaps and any of them are yours. Send no money. We trust you. Girls and boys do as well as older people. Write at once for full information. We mail handsome illustrated catalog free. Address Great Northern Soap Works, 54 Lake St., Oak Park, Ill.
1900 HIGH GRADE
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This elegant SOLID GOLD plated stylish curb link Bracelet, beautifully engraved, with heart shaped locket that opens with a dainty little key, & also this magnificent Solid Gold Shell Birthday Ring. You get both of them free. Just send us your name & address (letter or postal), that's all, & we will send you 20 Pks. of our Sweet Leonin Perfume to sell at 10c, when sold, send us the money & we will promptly send you this Bracelet & Ring. We run all the risk and take back what you cannot sell. Our reliability is established. We refer to the publisher of this paper or to any National Bank in this city. Our Perfume sells at sight & is wanted in every home.
BIRTHDAY RING
THE LEONIN CO., Dept. 601 St. Louis, Mo.
COUPON NO. 601 If you are wise you'll cut out & return this coupon to-day, with your answer & we will send you an elegant Gold plated Stone set Ring free for your prompt answer.
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SELLS AT SIGHT. EWALD'S ALUMINUM COMBINED PEN AND PENCIL-HOLDER
HOLDS PENCIL IN POCKET—QUICKLY CONVERTED TO PEN-HOLDER. HANDY POCKET IN A SHIRT.
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26 YEARS OLD.

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—BY—
W. D. BOYCE CO.

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BEWARE OF STRANGERS.

THE LEDGER employs no traveling agents to solicit subscriptions, and every person working in that capacity is a fraud. No person is authorized to take subscriptions for THE LEDGER unless he or she be well known in the city or village where they have been appointed agents to sell this paper every week. A liberal reward will be paid for evidence that will enable us to arrest and convict such persons as are now traveling from town to town in different sections of this country, claiming to be agents of THE LEDGER and thereby defrauding the people. Beware of strangers.

One trouble with the American hog is that it doesn't vote in any of the European countries.

Archibald Forbes is dead, but Richard Harding Davis still lives, and is as full of concealed strategy as ever.

The demand for a half-cent coin appears to have come from one of those mysterious counties where the milk sickness rages.

Kipling says the report that he gets $5 a word for everything he writes is not true. This is quite a compliment to some of the publishers.

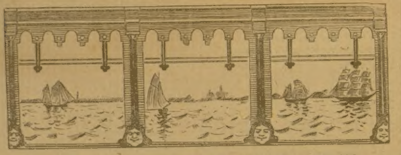
Wouldn't it be better for Salisbury and Chamberlain to exhibit Kruger in London at a shilling a head than to hang him—when they catch him?

Alabama reports one of the greatest mint crops on record. What happy days these would be for the south if Kentucky would only hurry and get her troubles settled.

The manager of a St. Louis theater has announced that no more mother-in-law jokes will be tolerated in his house. Perhaps wife's mamma has come to live with them.

To complete the University of Chicago in all its departments according to the plans of Doctor Harper will require a total endowment of over $20,000,000. The fund, therefore, is now about Midway.

One of the strange results of the war in south Africa is an increase in the price of barbed wire in America. So say the dealers, who give the war as an excuse for the advance in prices, and it would seem with more reason than excuses are often given for advances—although now, as in other cases, the ability to get more for the barbed wire may have suggested the excuse. It is certain that there is an enormous demand for barbed wire in south Africa, and the market there has been almost entirely stripped of the stuff. The wire is used by both Boers and British in strengthening kopjes and field positions. It was found useful for the purpose during the Cuban insurrection and again in the Philippines. In south Africa the Boers have made excellent use of the fencing and it has probably found a regular place in the list of munitions of war. It is doubtless true that any international court of aw[illegible] would hold that barbed [illegible] f war. It is [illegible]



A CORNER IN WHEAT.

How Two Young Men Plotted to Wreck a Railway Train, and How Fate Played Into Their Hands.

By MARY BELLE BENNETT.

(Copyrighted, 1900

Begun in No. 14, April 7. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back numbers can be procured from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER III.

Bending over his books at a standing desk in the office of his employers, Fowler gave but grudging half attention to the work upon which he was engaged, on that hot July morning which Grant Davis spent in the heart of the Indiana swamp, luring men in faded overalls from the narrow and, not infrequently, rocky path of integrity and duty.

The other, and, it must be confessed, more absorbing half of his attention was directed to consideration of his own complicated affairs. There were moments when he deeply regretted that he had consented to the tempting proposals made by his friend, seeing nothing but disappointment and loss of money in the final reckoning. Again, he dwelt upon the dangerous conspiracy with hopeful anticipations, certain that success would attend, bringing much wealth and unlimited leisure.

Whenever a messenger boy dashed into the building, he leaned expectantly out of the open window at the side of his desk, which gave upon the public passage, and watched with wistful eyes, for every instant he expected the promised dispatch from Grant. If the messenger passed by, he followed him down the building with his eyes, half believing that he had made a mistake and would return. And so, in great anxiety and perturbation of spirit, Fowler passed the morning. Just before twelve o'clock, the expected message arrived. As he held it in his trembling hand for a moment before opening the yellow envelope, Fowler half-wished that the plans of the enthusiastic Grant had somehow failed, and that there would be no need of his considering the matter further. The two hundred and fifty dollars Grant had taken with him he could afford to lose, he thought.

But when at last he tore open the dispatch and read "The timber is all right," the words agreed upon in case everything went well, he was, too, not a little elated, so human nature is a strange thing, after all, as I have heard wiser people than myself declare time and time again. Fowler realized that it was a rash thing to do to put his little mite into the wheat pit against the millions already laid on the other side, and handled by men familiar with all the trickery of the street, but he was beginning to have a good deal of confidence in Grant. If he had succeeded so far, he thought, he could carry the deal through.

At noon, under plea of illness, Fowler secured, not without many protests from the head bookkeeper, leave of absence until Monday morning, and, after drawing his money from the bank, went to lunch with a light heart. He sought a restaurant not far from the board of trade building, thinking that he might there meet some of the brokers' clerks whom he knew, and by quizzing them gain a faint knowledge of how to go about what was before him, for he had never interested himself in speculative matters, and was as innocent of all knowledge of the wheat pit as the veriest child.

The first man of his acquaintance he met was Charley Bentley, clerk for Maynard & Small, a leading firm of brokers. Bentley was chummy and communicative, as usual, and seated himself next to Fowler when they entered a restaurant and took their places at the long counter. I would like to say something right here about those horrible counters whereon are served coffee and "sinkers," and pie of the most horrible description, and everything that will ruin the stomach and distract the mind but what is the use? People will rush up to them just the same and feed there with their elbows in their neighbor's sides, and a man waiting behind every other stool, for all the world like hogs with their feet in the trough. So I shall say nothing about how city people lunch. If you ever knew "Hitch's" place on newspaper row, now—but never mind.

"It's my opinion," said Charley, between pie bites, "that the boys have got old Poole about skinned. He can't carry such a load forever."

"I'll bet you $1," said an aggressive looking man who sat on the other side of Fowler, "that Mr. Poole will carry his deal through and come out with flying colors."

Bentley looked up with a shade of annoyance on his face.

"Excuse me," he said, "but I did not speak to you. It strikes me, however, that you would better go to some of the brokers [illegible] ant to take chances on the market."

[illegible] other, and noth-

[illegible] said Bent-

"Do you really think the market will weaken?" asked Fowler.

"If you ask me with a view to following my advice in the market," was the reply, "I tell you frankly that I know nothing about it. I have no means of knowing that you yourself do not possess."

"Well," said Fowler, nerved at last to the plunge, "I have had a little windfall, and I think I'll go into your place and gamble that the market does weaken. It can't go on like this forever."

"Don't invest anything on the strength of my hasty remark," said Bentley. "Do you know anything about the market?"

Fowler confessed that he did not, and Bentley coached him for a few moments as to the meaning of "puts" and "calls," and "selling long," and "selling short," and "margins," and all the erst. Then Fowler handed his money, all save ten dollars, which he kept for expenses, over to Bentley, and said he wanted to sell short with a put up margin of five cents. Bentley explained that the firm would get the deal for him when the board opened in the morning.

"The market will probably open at $1.50," said Bentley, "and your five cent margin is a mighty small one for such troublous times. Hadn't you better handle less grain and make a better margin?"

"No," said Fowler, "I think it's all right as it is. It can't go up five cents tomorrow morning."

"If it should," he mused, as he walked away, "if it should go up early in the day so as to close me out, and then go down fit to make both our fortunes after there is no hope. Perhaps I should have taken Bentley's advice regarding the margin. But, then, the only way to make anything with my small capital is to take every chance."

Fowler passed a bad night and slept late into the next morning. When he at last awoke Grant was shouting and pounding at his door. As Fowler turned the key Grant bounded in and went capering about the floor like a mad man.

"The trap is set!" he shouted. "Just wait until the board opens. Then you'll hear something drop—drop 'with a dull, sickening thud,' as the reporters say. You made the deal, of course?"

Fowler replied that he had.

"Who are your brokers?" demanded Grant. "Tell me all about it."

Fowler explained.

"That's all right," said Grant. "We'll go down there before we eat and tell 'em to keep on selling as our profits pile up—to keep on selling as long as they can make a deal. Oh, we'll have old Poole's hide on the fence before tonight."

Then, while Fowler was getting ready for the street, Grant related what had taken place in Indiana.

"You are certain that you can trust the men?" asked Fowler, when Grant finished. "It wouldn't be pleasant to get on the wrong side of the market, you know."

"It's all right," insisted Grant. "The fellows are dead sore on the railway people."

"And they will be careful and not go too far?" persisted Fowler. "We don't want any bloody wreck on our hands."

"Of course not," was the reply. "To tell the truth, I didn't go into the details of the matter with them, but it's for their interest to look out for that. Come on."

After leaving the room they hastened to the office of the brokers and gave the instructions suggested, meeting with queer looks from the clerk who listened to them.

"I guess," said Grant, as they walked away toward a restaurant, "that the fellow doesn't figure on our having any profits to build on. We'll show him!"

After breakfast, which neither of them enjoyed, so great was their excitement, they went over on Fifth aveneue, to the vicinity of the evening newspaper offices, and loitered about, waiting for bulletins.

"You see," explained Grant, "we'll get the news we are expecting sooner here than anywhere else, for the thing may be suppressed at the board of trade at first. And then, we'll be just as well off here, anyway. We know nothing about wheat deals and we are just as well away from the scene of action. The brokers will do their part all right."

Presently, at one of the newspaper offices, a clerk was seen fastening a blue-penciled bulletin inside one of the windows, with the writing next to the glass. Grant forced his way through the little crowd of loiterers and read the bulletin with staring eyes.

"Bad railway wreck in Indiana," it read. "President Poole's special takes a plunge into a swamp. No details as yet."

"You see how it is," said Grant, excitedly. "My men are doing the job up right. It is exactly the hour for opening the board," he added, thoughtfully, turning away. "I wonder if this dispatch will be repeated down there?"

"The brokers will have it, you may be sure," said Fowler, "though the news may not be generally known except to those on the street. They are up to all such dodges down there, and it will be regarded as bogus. You see the mention of Poole's name will attract attention and create suspicion."

As he ceased speaking the clerk again made his appearance at the window of the newspaper office with a square of paper in his hand. Fowler read the written words before the sheet could be put in position at the side of the first bulletin.

"Poole, the king of the wheat pit, instantly killed in the wreck on the Hoosier Central," it read. "The report creates great excitement on the board of trade."

The young man started back with a white face. So the news was there already.

"Poole killed!" he faltered. "What does it mean? You didn't arrange for——"

Grant was now trembling with a ghastly terror.

"I don't understand it," he said. "My God, I hope that my hands are free of blood!"

He turned away with a shudder, but Fowler caught his arm.

"Wait," he said. "Here's another bulletin."

They read it with sinking hearts as the clerk slowly fixed the paper by the side of the others in the window.

"Killing of Poole confirmed," it read. "Panic at the board of trade increasing every instant. The only wire leading to the scene of the wreck is down, and additional news cannot now be obtained. The wreck is twenty miles from any other telegraph line, and men have started across country on fast horses to seek denial or confirmation of the news. Plot suspected."

Without daring to look into each other's faces, and without speaking a word, the young men moved swiftly toward the board of trade building. Everywhere men were talking excitedly. In the vicinity of the building they sought, the excitement was beyond all precedent. Men howled like wild beasts and raved like lunatics. Reports from within the building showed that wheat was going down, down, down. The price had dropped from $1.50 to $1.45, to $1.30, to $1.25, to $1.20, to a point where there was but a few desperate upward bids.

Time and again the "bulls" made desperate efforts to uphold the market, hoping to stay the slump in prices until further details could be received. But all to no purpose. It was a forenoon of great excitement. Wheat went down to $1.15 before the closing hour. The young men learned by inquiry at the office during the forenoon that their brokers were making heavier and heavier deals for them as the panic progressed, but their minds were not just then fixed on gain. They wandered about with gloomy face, half expecting to hear of the arrival of telegrams announcing the arrest of the two men with whom Grant had made the now regretted compact.

After one o'clock the time wore slowly away, and nothing new was received.

"It takes a long time for those men to ride twenty miles and back," said Fowler.

"It's an awful country down there," said Grant, "and there is no knowing how far into the swamp the men will have to ride. I wish we had never gone into the thing. I feel like a murderer and a railway robber rolled into one."

"I suppose we've made a pile of money," said Fowler, "but I don't feel like touching a cent of it. I am afraid it will smell of blood."

"Let's go and find out," suggested Grant. "It will occupy our attention for a short time, at least, though, for a fact, I don't much reckon on enjoying it. Oh, if I had those men down there by the neck!"

"But you haven't," said Fowler, with a faint smile. "On the other hand, it looks as if they had us by the neck."

At the broker's office the young men were met with excited faces and words of uncertainty.

"It's been a swift, trying day," said one of the members of the firm, in response to Fowler's request for a statement, "and we can't give you figures at present. You see, some of the firms we sold to on your account have gone to the wall, and can't settle in full. Gone to the wall, a whole lot of them, but we'll get something out of it for you. Been a great day, hasn't it?"

Grant and Fowler turned away without a word of reply. When they got outside the building, they turned toward their rooms, which were in the same house, and walked along in silence.

And so there was an uncertainty about their money, after all! They had gone through this wasting suspense, this nerve-destroying anxiety, to be met with practical failure at last!

CHAPTER IV.

"Can it be true that Poole is dead?"

This was the question in the minds of the young schemers as they sat together in Grant's room.

"If he is indeed dead, was his death intentional on the part of men who had undertaken to detain the train and prevent telegraphic communication, beyond the bare announcement that the wreck had occurred?"

They studied over this problem, too, and found little comfort in the solution that came to them.

"The five o'clock papers may have something new on the subject," said Grant, hopefully. "A man riding any sort of an old plug ought to go that twenty miles and back in time to send news in from Knollville, the nearest telegraph office, in time for the last editions."

"I wonder what those men are doing?" said Fowler. "They may be under arrest, for all we know, or they may be getting out of the country, with officers in pursuit. If they knew your whereabouts, they might even put us in peril by coming here."

Grant, turning pale in a second, began to dig in his pockets.

"Say," he said, "I remember feeling in my pockets down there for a card to give them, a card bearing my name and the number of this house. I wonder if I found it, or whether my attention was so absorbed in the other matter that I forgot to give it to them? My intention was to give them a card, as a sort of guarantee of good faith, and the chances are that I did give them one if I found it while the notion was in my head. Yes, here are the cards, and it is quite likely that our address is known to both men."

Fowler sprang from his chair and walked nervously up and down the floor of the little room.

"In that case," he said, "it may be just as well for us to remain away from these rooms for a time."

"Oh, you are safe enough," said Grant. "Whatever comes of this fool business you shall not suffer. There is nothing connecting you with the affair, and I'll keep my face closed. It'll my fault, and I'll take care of you, my boy."

"I'll consent to nothing of the kind," was the grim reply. "Whatever comes, we'll share together."

Fowler clasped Grant's hand for a moment, and then the latter called attention to a bit of writing on a paper lying in his hand.

"See here," he said, "this is the germ of what was to electrify the street today, in case everything went off as planned. See, the report was to be circulated that Poole, failing in efforts to raise money for his immediate needs in the city, had gone away with a party of capitalists to negotiate the sale of his recent purchase. That would have made him trouble enough, I guess, especially as the reports could not have been denied until after our deals had been closed."

"Rather weak," said Fowler, "but it might have done the business. Come, we may as well vacate for a few days."

At that moment a knock sounded on the closed door of the room.

"Come in," shouted Grant, thinking only of some friendly lodger desirous of a social chat and a pipe.

The door swung open and the man Grant had first talked with at the station in Indiana stood revealed, clad no longer in faded overalls, but consciously splendid in a ready-made suit of black and a flaming red necktie, which concealed the entire front of his shirt.

Grant stood for a moment gazing at the newcomer with a look of dismay upon his face and then sank into a chair. The man from Indiana stepped inside the room, closed the door, and stood awkwardly fumbling his hat in his hand.

"I've had a job finding you," he finally said.

"Why are you here?" demanded Grant, "and what news do you bring?"

"News you will like to hear," was the reply. "Having done my part of the work, I am here to close the matter."

"Where is Pool?" asked Grant, faintly.

"Poole," began the other, "he's just about the maddest man you ever set eyes on. I came across coutnry with him in a wagon, and into the city on the same train. He swears he's ruined."

The man's words swept the look of terror from Grant's face as the sun sweeps away the mists of the morning. He arose to his feet again and extended his hand, which the man from Indiana seized and shook warmly, grinning every second of the time.

"Why was the report of his death sent in?" demanded Grant. "You gave me a mighty bad day."

"It was like this," began the other. "A short time before the special was due, the dry grass in the swamp above the station caught fire. No, I didn't set the fire, and I don't know who did. Guess some timber hunters left burning matches lying around. The timbers of one of the bridges ahead of the special got pretty badly burned, and the engine fell through. Yes, sir, went into the swamp stream, and the engineer and fireman jumped for their lives. They looked like mud rats when I saw 'em an hour later, all drippin' with black stuff from the swamp, that sticks like paint."

"And Poole?" asked Grant, excitedly.

"Oh, he wasn't much hurt," was the reply, "though he fainted and fell, and a passenger called out that he had been killed, his face being bruised and bloody, and so my brother sent in the message. The fire burned the telegraph poles down, and melted the wire," he added, with a long, suggestive wink, "and we couldn't contradict the first message. I suppose you don't mind the report of his death being sent in? Must 'a' helped things out?"

"Yes," said Grant, "it helped things out with a vengeance. Do you mean to say that you did not set fire to the swamp?"

"There was no occasion to," was the evidently truthful reply, "it being all afire when we woke up, or when I woke up, rather. Guess my brother was down there at the station most all night, figurin' out what to do in your matter. No, the fire helped us out."

"And destroying the telegraph line?" insisted Grant.

"Of course."

There was a queer look on the man's face, and Grant did not care to press that matter further.

"My brother got fired for sending in the report that Poole was dead," said the man. "Poole wanted to lick him. Huh! Lick my brother! I guess not! Brother wasn't there, anyway, for Poole didn't know of that until he got to Knollville."

Further questioning brought out the fact that Poole had wired in from Knollville about the time the young men had left the office of the brokers; so, by keeping away from the street, they had subjected themselves to unnecessary anxiety.

I never knew just how much money the two graceless young scamps made that day, but it was a goodly pile. I do know, however, that the Indiana man departed for home the next day with a large roll of banknotes in his possession, and that Grant and Fowler soon bought into a safe business on the West side.

Now and then such conscienceless schemes produce good results, but the experience of Grant and Fowler proves that they are not good for one's peace of mind. The wheat market did not recover the next day, and Poole was ruined, together with many others who aided and abetted him in his efforts to corner the wheat market. But, as Poole and his followers received only a dose of their own brewing, I cannot say that they received much sympathy. At any rate, I am certain that those who made fortunes that day, and who were probably no better than the losers, shed no tears over the event.

In conclusion, I am able to state that Grant and Fowler never mixed themselves in another wheat deal, and that they have permanently gone out of the train wrecking business, as have also the two Indiana men, who are now prosperous farmers somewhere in the great west.

(The end.)

Epitaph of Ruskin's Mother.

A correspondent writes to the editor of the London Standard, as follows:

I shudder at the injustice which you have done, alike to mother and son, in asserting that "there is no inscription to the memory of Mrs. Ruskin" on her tomb at Shirley.

If there had been such an omission it would have represented inexpressible sorrow, but dutiful devotion was equal even to this demand, and the pen of John Ruskin never acquitted itself more worthily than in the following tribute inscribed at the upper end of the altar tomb:

(0)(0)(0)(0)(0)(0)(0)(0)(0)(0)(0)(0)(0)(0)(0)(0)(0)
(0) Here, (0)
(0) Beside my father's body, (0)
(0) I have laid (0)
(0) My mother's. (0)
(0) Nor was dearer earth (0)
(0) Ever returned to earth, (0)
(0) Nor purer life (0)
(0) Recorded in Heaven. (0)
(0) She died Dec. 5th, 1871, (0)
(0) Aged 90 years. (0)
(0)(0)(0)(0)(0)(0)(0)(0)(0)(0)(0)(0)(0)(0)(0)(0)(0)

Bedding for Vegetarians.

Sir Isaac Pitman invented the "vegetarian bed," composed, not of feathers, but of mosses, ferns, flowers, and hay. This bedding material, commended as healthy and health-giving by many doctors and others, has become famous in vegetarian circles and deserves to be more widely known. "It smells like ozone," is the testimony of more than one physician, and many say that sleeping upon it "gives rest to brain and mind."

Great Mormon Tabernacle.

The tabernacle at Salt Lake City is, in respect of its acoustic properties, the most remarkable place of worship in the world. It is constructed to hold 25,000 people, yet it is possible for a person standing at one end to distinctly hear the sound of a pin dropped into a hat at the other, a test of its curious power to convey sound which is offered to every stranger who is shown over the building.

Nome City, Alaska,

Is twenty-four hundred and fifteen miles from Seattle, via ocean, thirty-three hundred and eighteen miles overland. Is said to be the richest gold field discovered up to this time. The first steamer will leave Seattle on or about May 10, 1900. For full particulars, maps, etc., address C. N. Souther, Tkt. Agent, Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway, 95 Adams St., Chicago, Ill.

A Foreign Tongue.

"As I understand it," said the talkative one, "the Africanders trekked from the voorlooper to the kopje, and dorped it from the spruit to the disselboom. It stands to reason, too, for—"

"I don't understand golf," the other cut in, wearily.

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Heart to Heart Confidences.

Pertie Goodwin—Don't tell anybody, for the world! See this ring? Art Smasher slipped it on my finger last night.

Meena Zevver—Yes, it's nice looking, but it will make a black circle around your finger before you've worn it a week. It did on mine.

Boy's Secret Society—Membership Free.

Any boy can join the C. M. A. free. It is the great original and only secret society for boys under 21 years of age. It has grips, signs, passwords, badges, secret emblems, secret language, funny initiations, etc. The society is chartered by law, and has nothing in it to interfere with your religion or politics. Thousands of members everywhere. You can pick them out when you are a member by certain signs, etc. Send your [illegible] boys you think would [illegible] to join. Enclose stamp. Address THE STAR, [illegible] Mason Street, Oak Park [illegible]

We Have All Met Him.

"What sort of a fellow is Bobbers in a social way?"

"Oh, he is one of those idiots who would say 'sweets to the sweet' when he was passing the pickles to a lady of uncertain age."

Johnny Get Your Gun

And go down to Shelby, on the Monon, where Mallard, Pintails, Bluebills and Teal are so thick as to bother the sportsmen. Ticket Office, 232 Clark St.

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Take Laxative Bromo Quinine Tablets. All druggists refund the money if it fails to cure. E. W. GROVE'S signature is on each box. 25c.

Discipline Made Easy.

"Does your husband make any sacrifices during Lent?"

"Yes, he gives up oatmeal; he hates it, anyhow."

Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup for Children teething, softens the gums, reduces inflammation, allays pain, cures wind colic. 25 cents a bottle.

Preliminaries.

The First Arrival—Why, what is that noise, Willie?

Willie—Oh, that's papa and mamma trying to get the family skeleton back into the closet before the guests arrive.

IN A CIGAR.

A chemist says he's analyzed a cigar
And learnedly he tells us just what its ingredient [illegible]
Acetic acid, prussic, too, phenol and nicotine,
Some sulphuretted hydrogen, a touch of picoline,
Valerianic acid and ammonia, so he wrote,
With acid propionic and a trace of creosote.

But he didn't find the essence that will set a mind at peace,
And he overlooked the tincture that gives care a swift release,
He missed the oil of happiness that keeps the [illegible] gleam;
And doesn't mention how the smoke will float you to a dream
Of happy days and good old friends, until in it you trace,
The graces and the dimples of a well remembered face.

He didn't find the reason why so many fancies are
Wrapped up in such a package as that very same cigar;
He found a small-sized drug store, but somehow he couldn't catch
The comfort that one can secure if he applies a match.
And though he found the acids and the other queer-named stuff,
He couldn't trace the pleasure that there is in every puff.

Americans' Good Memory.

Max O'Rell in New York Journal.

A few days ago I walked into the office of the Grand Central station in Forty-second street and asked for a ticket and sleeping berth for Toronto. "Well, how are you?" said the clerk behind the counter.

"Very well," I answered.

"Last time you came here," he added, "I gave you a ticket for Oberlin Ohio."

"Well, I guess," said I, knowing the American language, "that was five years ago."

"I guess that's right," he said.

He guessed right.

You go into an American hotel and ask if John Smith is in.

"Pst!" says the clerk to a hall boy, "go and see if 876 is in."

And John Smith has perhaps only been a day in the house.

I have watched hotel clerks sort hundreds of letters and place them, one after the other, in the boxes of the rack, without once looking at the register for reference.

You may live at the Savoy or at the Cecil hotel in London, for a year. Every time you take the elevator the attendant will ask you: "What floor?" After you have once told the negro boy who runs the elevator of any American hotel what floor you are on, he knows where to land you.

I have seen boys stand outside the dining room of American hotels and receive in rapid succession as many as 500 hats, all [illegible] all alike, no name inside, no possible way—so far as I could see—to distinguish one from the other. The owner of those hats came out in an altogether different order from the way they went in. The boy handed the hats to those people without one making a mistake.

A few months ago I was in a hotel in Leeds, England. Before I entered it a boy standing outside gave me a ticket for my hat. When I came out he gave me the wrong hat. How I did pity that poor young Briton. What an inferior being I thought he was compared to the ordinary negro boy of an American hotel.

The conductor of an American train may have over 500 passengers under his charge. They have all come in at different stations, [illegible] all going to different stations. As they come in he collects their tickets. That's all; he remembers the destination of every one of them. Not one would he allow to travel further than the station he bought a ticket for. In Europe when the conductor has examined your ticket he locks the door of your comparptment to be sure of you at the next stop. Dear old Europe, dear old museum of antiquities!

The fact is that the whole of America is a huge thinking machine, a huge mind constantly on the alert and kept in good working order by a strong, bracing, invigorating climate, which alone can explain these marvelous feats of memory. What strikes a European most forcibly in the states is the absence, the total absence, of stupid looking faces—and this is a great treat for a European. The Americans are not all beautiful, but they are all intelligent looking. I say what strikes that European who travels in any part of the United States is not so much the unmatched discoveries of Edison, of any of the great achievements of the American people in science, commerce and industry, not so much their bold bridges, their railways and what not. No, what strikes him most forcibly are those thousand and one little [illegible] discoveries which add so much comfort to every-day life—those ingenious little inventions which in Europe make us always exclaim "That's American!" Made in Germany means shoddy, made in France means artistic, that's American means ingenious.

Friday Not an Unlucky Day.

The ill-repute of Friday as an unlucky day is shown by some current statistics to be undeserved. A careful investigation, largely through official channels, has been made of the matter in Germany, and as a result it is found that of 9,948 weekly accidents and disasters, such as are commonly attributed to bad luck, 1,674 occurred on Monday, 1,551 on Tuesday, 1,631 on Wednesday, 1,547 on Thursday, 1,638 on Friday, 1,638 on Saturday, and 269 on Sunday. The most noteworthy feature of these figures, apart from their vindication of Friday, is the uniformity of distribution of mishaps among the six secular days of the week, the difference between the most and the least "unlucky" days being less than one-tenth. The day of most disasters is Monday.

A Kick Coming.

"Blame it all!" muttered the white cow under the leaky shed. "I am wet to the skin."

"So am I," said the red cow. "And to think I just heard the milkman tell his neighbor that all of his cows were dry."

FREE TO MEN

A most successful remedy has been found for sexual weakness such as impotency, shrunken organs, nervous debility, lost manhood, night emissions, premature discharge and all other results of self abuse or excesses. It cures any case of the difficulty, never fails to restore the organs to full natural strength and vigor. The doctor who made this wonderful discovery wants to let every man know about it. He will therefore send the receipt giving the various ingredients to be used so that all men at a trifling expense can cure themselves. He sends the receipt free, and all the reader need do is to send his name and address to L. W. Knapp, M. D., 1407 Hull Bldg., Detroit, Mich., requesting the free recipe as reported in this paper. It is a generous offer, and all men ought to be glad to have such an opportunity.

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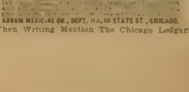

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BOYS AND GIRLS CORNER

AN OCEAN MYSTERY.

The Adventures of Three Boys Who Were Cast Away on a Desolate Island in the Polar Sea.

By ALFRED H. TOZER.

(Copyrighted 1900.)

Began in No. 14, April 7. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back numbers can be procured from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER IV.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.

When Charley found himself swimming in the chill waters of the sea, after falling from the slanting deck of the Marion, his first effort was to gain the high but tolerable level top of a section of the broken iceberg, which he saw floating but a few feet away.

He was, however, muffled in his thick, heavy arctic clothing, made heavier now by being saturated with water, his hold on the smooth ice was at best but a slender one, and to his dismay he discovered that he could not succeed in the attempt. Therefore, imitating the example set by the polar bears a few moments before, he sought other means of rescuing himself from his icy bath, but it was not toward the island that he looked, of course.

Surrounded as he was by a mass of drifting ice, he knew that it would be comparatively easy for him to keep his head above water; but he knew, too, that in a short time he must succumb to the deadly chill of the water and sink to the bottom, as he had seen the unfortunate seamen do. Whatever was done, then, must be done without delay. He cried out at the top of his voice, hoping that Robert would hear him and come to the rescue, but he saw no signs of his friend on the deck above him.

Then he observed a rope dangling from the side of the vessel. It had lain for a long time between the side of the ship and the surface of the now destroyed iceberg, and was therefore covered with ice and resembled a spar more than it resembled a piece of hemp, but the boy believed that he could make his way up its slippery length to the deck of the Marion. He struck out in its direction boldly, swimming around large pieces of ice and pushing the smaller ones aside, until he had the satisfaction of grasping the rope with both hands.

Then, summoning all his strength and agility, he began working his way upward It was a difficult undertaking, especially as his clothing was now frozen stiff and his hands were numb with the cold. By painful exertion, however, he succeeded in mounting upward a few feet, then his benumbed hands lost heir hold and he fell into the sea again

Down, down down! It seemed to the falling boy that the water beneath him was thousands of miles in depth, and that he was fated to reach the very bottom. He knew that he was descending close to the side of the vessel, for now and then he brushed against the planking. Even at that intense moment he found himself wondering what was transpiring beyond the wall of wood which was there within reach of his hand, yet which shut him out from life and hope. He remembered, too, the shouts he had heard just before falling into the water, and wondered what had occasioned them; wondered if Will Melville had been discovered drowned in his bed. He found himself wondering ,too, if his own body would ever rise to the surface again, and if Robert would see it, and so know that he had not purposely deserted him

At last, after sinking miles and miles, as it appeared to him, and consuming an interminable period of time in the descent, the boy found himself resting on a broad shelf of ice on a level with the bottom of the ship. Strangling, suffocating from lack of air as he was, he noticed, as in a dream, that the bottom of the ship rested squarely upon the ice-bed upon which he had fallen. Indeed, the keel appeared to have forced its way deep into the ice, thus keeping the ship in an upright position.

All this he saw, but at that time the full significance of it did not possess his brain. He was choking, dying, for want of air. He cast his arms out in agony and began with an involuntary motion to swim toward the surface, which he finally reached, more dead than alive. But for the lucky chance which brought him up in a spot free from ice, and placed his hand in contact with the rope from which he had fallen, he would undoubtedly have gone down instantly, never to rise again.

Hanging there, numb and exhausted, he heard a ringing shout from above, and then he saw Robert standing on the deck of the vessel with a long rope in his hand, a rope upon one end of which was a large loop.

"Throw your arms through the noose when it reaches you, he heard his chum cry, and then the rope came whirling through the air, striking the water close at his side

Charley obeyed blindly for he was only half conscious of what was being said, only half conscious of what he was doing. Then he felt a great strain on one arm It seemed as if it was being pulled from its socket Then followed a sensation of being hauled slowly through the air, of bumping like a dangling block of wood against the side of the ship, and the next moment he found himself lying on the deck of the Marion, with Robert bending over him.

"A lucky catch that!" said Robert, "didn't break your arm, did it, old man?

Charley rubbed his arm and tried to smile.

Pulled it out, I guess," he said, making no effort to rise to his feet.

"Come," said Robert, "you mustn't remain here. It's nice and warm in the cabin. Come on! Didn't you hear me calling to you to come down'

"Warm in the cabin repeated the boy. "I thought the ship was going down. Did I dream all that'

"I guess not," said the other, pulling Charley to his feet. "Just before I came on deck to see why you didn't come. I felt a heavy jar, like the ship had touched the bottom, and she hasn't settled an inch since. I don't know what to make of it, but the ship has stopped taking in water, and that's enough for me to know at present."

"I felt that jar, too," said Charley, rubbing his arm and trying to walk in his frozen clothes. "Confound this rig," he added, "I think I'll have to roll into the cabin. I don't seem to make my legs go."

But this was unnecessary, for Robert gave him a helping hand and in a very short time the drenched and half-frozen lad was sitting by the cabin fire, upon which Robert had heaped great piles of fuel, making the atmosphere of the place all that was to be desired

And there upon the bed was Will Melville, looking as bright and hopeful as ever. One gazing into his smiling face would little suspect the anguish of body and mind which the boy had undergone during the thrilling and dramatic scenes of the twenty-four hours last past. Robert put more coal into the stove, already heated red, mixed Charley a stimulating drink, and then sat down to talk over the next steps to be taken.

"We are all right at present," he said, "but the ship may start toward the bottom again at any moment, and we must be prepared for such a contingency. I don't know what is holding her up now, but the chances are that whatever it is won't do so for ever We must make a raft, put a lot of provisions on board, and be ready to push off for the island on short notice."

"I know what holds her up," said Charley. "I saw it all when I was down there a little while ago. The bottom of the iceberg extends to the west in the shape of a letter L and the ship rests on the extension. It may rest there for weeks, for all we know and in the meantime the iceberg must be drifting to the south. We may run across a whaler any day. If we build the raft, there is no knowing how far we may be from land when we get it done"

"I hope you are right about our drifting south," said Robert, "but I think we ought to be at work on the raft just the same. If we drift south the ice will melt away, and the ship may take a plunge at any time. Then the raft and the food stored upon it would come in very handy. What do you think about it, Will?" he added, turning to the wounded boy. "The captain being dead, you are now in full charge as the relative and agent of the owner"

Well," said Will, being on the sick list, I delegate my authority to you two boys Nice captain I'd make, with this ton of timber around my leg."

"I guess you are right, Bob," said Charley thoughtfully. "Yes, you are right about the raft, and I'm ready to go at it just as soon as I get something to eat. My, how hungry I am. Guess that cold water bath improved my appetite."

There were plenty of provisions within easy reach, and the boys soon had ready a steaming dinner of bacon, cornmeal pancakes, fried potatoes, sea-biscuit and coffee.

Notwithstanding the many perils surrounding them, the boys relished the meal, and they were just preparing to clear away the dishes when a loud sound from above attracted their attention.

CHAPTER V.

DISCUSSING THE ISLAND.

The boys listened to the noises from above for a moment, and then Charley seized the gun.

"It may be bears or walrus," he said.

"Sounds more like pistol shots," said Will.

"It must be the ice breaking," exclaimed Robert.

In a moment both boys were on deck. What they saw there sent a thrill of dismay through their veins. The iceberg to the east was indeed breaking up. Already a wide crevasse extended from the summit to the level of the dock. In a moment they felt the vessel settling once more, and heard the water pouring into the hold.

"The ship is tipping to the west," cried Robert, breathlessly. "The ice-shelf must have broken off. We must get to the land by some means. See, the island is not so far away as it was. Can it be a floating island?"

To the excited eyes of both boys the island did indeed appear to be drifting toward them, but a moment's reflection convinced them that the iceberg to which the ship was still in a measure attached was moving rapidly toward the west. Caught in some mysterious current, perhaps flowing hundreds of feet below the surface of the water, and acting on the very foot of the floating mass, the iceberg was heading for the rocky island.

While the boys stood there in amazement, seeing only death before them, a mass of ice which had been clinging to the very top of the iceberg fell to the east with a crash, and in an instant the ship was once more on a level keel. In addition to this, the iceberg, thus lightened, lifted a few feet, and the ship stopped taking water

The current which was now forcing the mountain of ice toward the island was a swift one. Literally carrying the ship in its arms, the berg swept rapidly forward, and, almost before the boys could consider the situation calmly, the rocks were but a few yards away.

"We are making good time," shouted Robert, a smile upon his pale face, "and if the speed does not lessen we'll soon be dashed against the red cliff there ahead."

"Here we go," cried Charley, in a moment, "drop down and catch hold of something."

Scarcely had the boys thrown themselves flat on the deck when there came a sharp blow, a sudden surging of the waters, a trembling of every timber in the doomed vessel, and the Marion settled down upon the bottom of a little bay which here penetrated for some distance the rocky wall of the island Scarcely realizing their good luck, the bays sprang to their feet. In a moment, however, they recognized the cause which had so marvelously contributed to their safety

A short distance from the island, directly off the mouth of the bay, the iceberg had grounded, thrown the vessel off, and fallen to pieces. The momentum attained during the swift passage had carried the vessel ahead, but with lessening speed, until she had grounded on the bottom of the bay, still in an upright position

Robert rushed into the cabin like a whirlwind and out again.

"Will is all right," he shouted. "The bump never touched him The cabin is dry, too, and we're all right. Now, for the island."

"Saved us the work of building a raft," said Charley "I wonder if the bears will be glad to see us?

"Let's go down and talk the situation over with Will," proposed Robert, and the boys were soon seated by the cabin stove.

"First," said Robert, after the happenings of the past few moments had been explained to Will, "first, what sort of an island is that?"

"Volcanic," said Charley, "consequently there's nothing there to eat, unless we have a taste for broiled bear, fried walrus and boiled sea gulls."

"We've got plenty to eat on board," suggested Will, "but the bears and gulls may help out when we want fresh meat. That is if the bears don't eat us. Any signs of human life there?"

Robert shook his head, but Charley gave a slight start, as if the question had brought to his mind some half-forgotten impression or experience. He arose to his feet and took several turns in the cabin before speaking.

"Say," he finally said, "I believe there are people on that island, for I saw smoke there just a little while ago."

"You must be mistaken," said Will.

"Well," said Charley, "it wasn't exactly smoke, though there was enough of that to color the atmosphere, but it was hot air, and no mistake. You know how hot air shivers and curls when it ascends? You've seen it over bonfires lots of times, I know. Well, when I was in the water, I saw hot air shivering and curling over that island."

"It can't be," said Robert. "There isn't enough fuel on that island to make a match stick."

"There may be coal there," insisted Charley.

"And there may be gold," laughed Will.

"Have it your own way," said Charley. "Time will shoow who is in the right. I know what I saw, I guess."

After some further talk, the boys decided on rebuilding one of the damaged whaleboats in order that communication might be had with the shore. Charley went on deck and soon returned with the report that the largest boat was all right except for a break in one side, where the falling ice had crushed it.

"We can cut a piece out of one of the other boats and fit it in," he explained, "and the boat will be about as good as new. And we'd better get right at it, for it's September now, and the Arctic winter will be down upon us by the first of November. Then we'll get about four months of perpetual winter, with the thermometer about sixty below"

"You must think we're going to stay here forever," said Will.

"We may be obliged to remain here for years," said Robert, gravely, "for that bit of rock over there isn't down on any map or chart that I ever saw, which shows that we are out of the track of the whalers."

'We may live here all our lives," said Charley. Nice prospect, isn't it? Well, I'd rather be living here than be kicked about in Boston and go to bed hungry every night!"

"Whether we stay here a month or a dozen years," said Robert, "we ought to be looking ahead and preparing for the worst The ship may be lifted by the surf and carried out to sea to sink, so we must be getting some of the provisions on the island After we get our boat built, we might even put up a cottage on that level space at he head of the bay. We can build it strong and thick and stock it with food. What do you say to that, boys?"

The suggestion met with favor, and work was at once begun. In a week's time the boat was ready for the water. The seam about the patch was somewhat bulging, but it was carefuly stuffed with oakum and tar until it was absolutely water tight. The oars were found to be in excellent condition.

While the work on the boat had been going on, the ship had settled more firmly into her bed, still maintaining a level keel, much to the surprise as well as the joy of the castaways The ice, too, had been gradually disappearing from the bay.

"I'd just like to know what keeps the ship up straight," said Charley, one day, as the boys sat in the cabin.

"I've studied it out," said Will. "You see

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the vessel didn't leave the ice upon which the bottom rested. The L broke off, and is still under the keel. Strange, isn't it? Though, if the ice melts, we'll go over like a top, and there's an end of our cosy nest."

This was accepted as the correct solution of the matter, as, indeed, it was. One day, about a week after the completion of the boat, the bay being nearly clear of ice, the craft was launched, and the boys began the work of getting the provisions out of the store rooms, though none of them had yet visited the island.

A few days later, when Charley arose one morning he discovered that Robert had taken a hasty breakfast and gone ashore in the boat. He was not a little alarmed at this, for the island was known to hold hungry bears in plenty, and the shores of the bay were lined with walrus. He had no means of knowing what other perils Robert might encounter, and he waited anxiously for his return.

CHAPTER VI.

WHERE THE SMOKE CAME FROM.

That Robert, the most prudent and the steadiest member of the party, should have made the first trip to the island alone puzzled Charley and Will not a little. From the deck Charley could see the whale boat lying in a little cove at the west end of the bay, with scores of great awkward, clumsy walrus tumbling about it, both in the water and on the land. Some of the strange animals were as large as an ox, with tusks two feet in length. Suppose they should take it into their stupid heads to destroy the boat? In that event nothing could save it. They had evidently paused in their work of gathering their breakfast of seaweed from the submarine rocks to make an investigation of the strange object, now completely at their mercy. Charley knew that if Robert should incautiously attack one of the animals the whole herd would hasten to the rescue and that their long tusks would make short work of both the boy and the boat.

As he watched the scene, Charley observed a great cream-colored polar bear saunter half way down the clip back of the bay. He was evidently looking for his breakfast, but was too cautious to attack such an army of walrus. The bear and the walrus are ever deadly enemies, and in the battles which take place between them and the great tusks of the latter are used with fatal effect.

"If Robert has sense enough to let the animals alone," mused Charley, "he may get out of the scrape all right, but his going there alone was a risky thing to do. How he would have scored me for such a caper."

In the meantime, Robert, gun in hand, and with two large-calibre revolvers within easy reach, was lowly clambering up the rugged face of the cliff to the west of the bay. He saw the bear, but was not molested by it, so he passed on. The walrus were not in sight when he landed and left the boat at what seemed to be a natural landing. The day before he had observed smoke drifting over the rocks, and he was bent on a tour of exploration.

The climb to the top of the cliff was a tedious one, but he presently gained the upper level and gazed about. The boy had been an eager student of geology, and his patiently acquired knowledge came to his relief when he fell to considering the remarkable formations he saw about him. The primal rock was evidently formed, strata by strata, of alternating felspar, quartz, and mica schist, red, white and silvery blue, as true and evenly as artist ever laid the colors. Then some upheaving force of nature from the volcanic depths below had tortured and twisted it, forming a maze of curious curves and angles in the perfect stratification, until, as if weary of such puny efforts, it had uplifted the whole on edge. Here and there a massive dyke of black basaltic rock cut through and occasionally a dark brown stain from some hidden iron deposit blotted the original formation. As the rocks had been forced up, they had here and there been forced apart at the strata seam, and the result was a succession of caves and narrow openings. It was, indeed, a marvelous scene upon which the boy gazed, especially as at that time melting drifts of snow were sending streams of water down the miniature gutters in the painted cliffs. The level space about the bay below was the solitary indentation in the outer wall of rock, so far as he could see.

Robert essayed to explore more than one of the openings referred to, but in each instance angry growls from the interior informed him that they were inhabited by bears, and that the tenants were jealous of their rights. As the boy left the coast ridge he saw that the surface dipped to the center of the island, and presently he found himself in a small circular valley in which there was no green thing, but which was alive with sea gulls. He could see smoke plainly now. It seemed to come from the top of a cone-like elevation in the center of the valley. Without delay he hastened toward the place, making a detour about the elevation before attempting to ascend it. A hundred paces to the north he came upon a larger opening in the rock than he had yet observed, and, keeping his gun ready for use, he advanced cautiously into it. As he proceeded the atmosphere grew warmer, and there was a heavy odor of sulphur over everything. After a time the dull, steady roar of flames came to his ears.

Filled with an awe which he could not even understand, frightened, yet fascinated by his strange position, by the thought of what he might discover there in the frozen north, where the foot of man had never before been set, the boy continued to advance.

At length, upon turning a sharp angle of the wall, a blinding light flashed into his eyes, a column of gaseous flame seemed to surround him, filling all the cavern where he stood, and he experienced a sense of heat and suffocation almost unendurable.

Dropping down upon his hands and knees, he essayed to retreat from the place, but he sought in vain for the tunnel-like opening through which he had journeyed. He had proceeded but a few paces when a terrific explosion occurred, lifting the roof of the cavern and whirling the rocky walls in every direction.

The air now cleared, for the passage was open to the sky, and the flaming gas which had occasioned the eruption had found means of escape. Encouraged by the bright sunshine which now crept in through the shattered roof, Robert arose to his feet and looked about. He saw at once that he was in a portion of a passage leading from the exterior wall of the cone to the main vent of an active volcano! He could plainly hear the roaring of the flames beyond the thin wall of rock which alone separated him from the chimney-like shaft. Indeed, through various small apertures in the wall he could see the many-colored flames leaping and swirling toward the vent at the top of the cone.

To say that the boy was dumb with amazement and wonder but poorly expresses his feelings. He knew that active volcanoes existed on the island on Jan Mayen, in latitude seventy and some minutes north, as well as in Iceland, farther to the south, but he had had no idea that here, on this desolate rock, he was fated to discover a new vent for the fires which burned in the interior of the earth.

He understood now why the island upon which he had landed was all unknown to chart-makers. The island itself had probably existed but a very short time. The growth of islands from volcanic causes is known to be very rapid. Thus running the matter over in his mind, the boy began to seek exit from the cavern, or, rather, from that which had but a moment before been a subterraneous place, but which was now but a pit in the sloping side of the cone.

To his dismay he soon discovered that the tunnel by means of which he had reached his present perilous position had been entirely closed by the explosion. The opening at the top was the only one in sight, and that was at least fifty feet away. Selecting the spot where the opening had existed, he began removing the rocks which blocked the way. He worked until he was faint from hunger and exertion, until his fingers seemed worn to the bone, yet he had made no perceptible progress. Then the true condition of affairs flashed upon him. The very walls of the passage itself had been thrown in by the force of the explosion, and to dig his way out would be the labor not of hours but of weeks. The task he had set himself to do was hopeless.

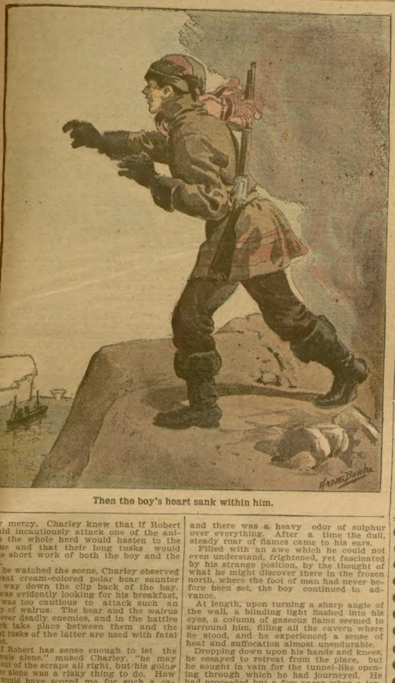
He next cast his eyes to the opening above. Following the original conformation of the rock before being forced on end, the wall on one side leaned over the spot where he stood. The other wall, however, the one to the east, sloped at about the same angle, and he saw that it might be possible to ascend it, though the undertaking would be difficult and dangerous in the extreme. But anything was better than dying there like a rat in a trap, and strapping his gun to his back, he began the ascent.

And so, toiling over jagged rocks still warm from contact with the gaseous flames; resting now and then in little crevices which steamed like a Russian bath and smelt strongly of sulphur; standing on ledges barely an inch in width; lying panting on sloping terraces whenever he was fortunate to come upon one; toiling and struggling upward, with the roar of the flames growing ever louder in his ears, with the dread of another explosion pushing him on to renewed exertion, he finally gained the summit of the ragged wall and looked out over the island.

Then the boy's heart sank within him. Below for more than a hundred feet stretched a perpendicular wall of rock. Turning back, he gazed into the pit from which he had climbed with so much labor. He saw that he had left the place none too soon, for through the crevices which he had previously observed in the thin wall of rock between the crater and the pit were pouring flaming streams of fiery lava.

How soon the cavity would fill to the brim with the burning substance, he had no means of knowing, but it was only a question of time when the burning mass would force him from his precious footing to the pointed rocks a hundred feet below. The fumes of the gases escaping from the crater were already overpowering, and it was with great difficulty that he maintained his hold. He grew faint and dizzy, and threw himself flat on the knife-like edge of the rocks to prevent falling.

This splendid story of adventure will be continued next week. The Ledger offers free cameras and patterns to its subscribers on pages thirteen and fifteen.



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THE DARKE HOUSE MYSTERY

BY MRS. E. BURKE COLLINS.

A desolate hill, standing up in the twilight—bare, gloomy, shadow-crowned. Nestling at its base, as if seeking to avoid the passer-by, is a large, rambling, castle-like structure—empty, deserted, now known as Darke House. This name had been derived from its former owners, but was strongly suggested by the dark shadows ever resting upon the building, cast by the hill behind it; but the still more dreadful shadows of suspicion, guilt, horror, which were attached to the name—the story of an unloving and unwilling bride, a jealous husband and an awful tragedy.

Crossing the rustic bridge—broken, vine-covered, and neglected—which spanned the muddy stream in front of the building, I passed through the dilapidated archway, where once a massive gate had swung, and then onward, through winding walks, ankle-deep in dead leaves and the debris of years, until a sudden turn in the avenue brought me straight to the door. Dare I enter? I was a timid little woman, and the tales told of this deserted mansion were fearful enough to curdle the blood in the veins of stronger mortals than myself; and more than one of the inhabitants of the village close by firmly believed in the wild tradition which invested this place with horror, and reported that the tragedy once enacted here was repeated by ghostly visitants. All this flashed through my mind as I paused there; but I was reckless and desperate that autumn afternoon, and so I pushed the thought of fear from my mind. And why should I not be reckless and desperate? I had thrown away the love of the only good man I knew in the world—given it up calmly, coolly, heartlessly. Only the night before I had said to Arthur Redmayne: "I do not love you." I had looked into the sad brown eyes, bent so caressingly upon me, and then coldly, deliberately, repeated the words, the wicked, false words, "I do not love you!"

"Then, may God forgive you," he had answered. "You have wrecked my life. My belief in woman's truth is dead, and you have killed it."

Ah, poor Arthur; he did not know that I had killed my own hopes also—my own happiness—knowingly, heartlessly. For, I had said to myself: "This love I bear Arthur Redmayne is an unpardonable weakness. I will conquer it, because, perforce, I must."

I was an orphan, had been reared in luxury, but now as poor as poverty can make one, and a dependent on the bounty of a worldly old aunt, who was endeavoring to make the most of me, and secure me an eligible parti. Her definition of a husband was, someone to take charge of me, thus relieving her from the responsibility; someone with a long account at his banker's, and a large endowment of this world's goods; someone who would install me mistress of a magnificent mansion, with plenty of hereditary plate, and no end of family diamonds. Had this not been democratic (?) America, she might even have stipulated a coronet; but that being inexpedient, she had concluded that a millionaire would answer all practical purposes, and so decided that Brian West would "fill the bill."

Brian West—ugh! I hated him; with his red face, coarse voice and boorish manners. For the life of me I could not forget "Locksley Hall," and my heart moaned over and over again:

"As the husband is, the wife is, thou art mated to a clown,
And the coarseness of his nature will have weight to drag thee down."

But it is strange how gold can gild everything that were else unpardonable; and my aunt considered him perfection. And thus it came to pass that I looked coolly into the face of the man I loved, nay, worshiped—and had repeated a wicked lie; then I turned away; and Brian West's engagement ring was flashing in the dying sunlight, on my finger today. Bound, aye, like a slave to his master; and golden fetters gall as severely as iron ones, sometimes.

Tall, imposing, built in the Elizabethian style, Darke House loomed up before me. The wide flight of marble steps leading to the main entrance was covered with slime and ooze, and the dead leaves piled themselves up upon them. I began to ascend them slowly. Half way up, great black snake thrust its head out from a pile of leaves and hissed at me, glaring with shining beads of eyes. I shrank back in terror as it began to descend the steps toward me, and, fearful of encountering it where I was standing, with a sickening sensation of fright I darted upward, nor paused again until I stood on the porch of the building. Then I drew a long sigh of relief and looked about me. A magnificent ruin, surely; and, curiosity overcoming other scruples, I passed on, in at the wide entrance. A marble-paved hall, from the center of which a remarkably broad and beautifully carved flight of stairs led to the second story, and on either side doors leading to spacious apartments. These doors were standing open, and the walls were covered with mildew and mould, while great bats hung helplessly to the cornices; and a strange bird, wheeling and flitting about the hall where I stood, finally paused in its erratic flight to perch itself above the outer portal, where were engraved the coat of arms of Darke House, a bloody hand, surmounted by the trite Latin motto, "V'ae victis." Then the strange bird settled itself above the portal like "the raven, never flitting;" almost I expected to see the curiously shaped beak open, to emit the horrible never-more, when, just then, the "eery" creature flapped its dusky wings and uttered an unearthly shriek. Horrified at the almost confirmation of my wild fancy, I turned and fled—I think fate had so ordained it—ran wildly up the broad oaken staircase; and when I paused breathless, panting, I found myself in a large, long apartment, with an immense window looking out upon a balcony, and not quite destitute of furniture, for it contained a queer, spindle-legged table, near which stood a rickety chair. Impelled by some impulse, I moved to the window and looked out. Beneath flowed the turbid stream, which I had crossed a short time before; but here it was blacker, gloomier, drearier than ever, and huge trees overhung it, covering with tangled vines and mosses. I shuddered.

Still gazing out upon the dismal scene, I noted then the gathering of dark clouds, while the distant roll of "heaven's artillery" announced the approach of a thunder storm, and, although I felt safely housed, I could not repress an uneasy feeling that began to steal into my heart and overpower my senses. Everything seemed oppressed with a deadly incubus; I felt like Marianna in the Moated range. Just then I heard behind me the faint rustling of a dress, and a soft footfall sounded on the floor. The blood seemed to freeze around my heart, and I dared not turn to see who my companion was; fear seized hold of me, and I clutched the window-frame to save me from falling. But my hand touched another hand, which was also grasping the casing. I drew back in an agony of fright; then, with a mighty effort, I conquered an impulse to leap from the shattered window into the stream beneath me. It was the hand of a woman resting there—a hand small, snow-white, dimpled, and glittering with diamonds. I turned involuntarily to view the owner of such perfect beauty; but, oh, horror I saw that with the wrist terminated the entire material body. Cold, trembling, unable to support my own weight, I moved slowly toward the chair, and sank into it, almost lifeless; while outside the thunder rolled and the lightning swept in broad, lurid flashes of blue flame across the chamber, and then rain fell in torrents. Horror without and horror within, the night coming down upon me in this horrible place—the haunted chamber. But still my eyes remained fixed upon the window-casing and the little hand thereon—fixed with glaring intensity, for I could not remove them; while I sat powerless, and heard again the rustle and sweep of the robe of my ghostly companion, and marked the dainty fingers, resting still, like a bit of exquisite carving. At last, with a desperate effort I wrenched my eyes from the scene that had transfixed them and looked around me. A cry of terror escaped my lips at sight of the transformation in the apartment. No longer bare, empty, deserted; it had become a marvel of beauty and elegance, lighted up by great lamps that threw a soft glow over all. A carpet of rose-colored velvet covered the floor; richly carved furniture, with hangings of the same hue, filled the room; pictures, books; all the paraphernalia of wealth and luxury—in short, the bed-chamber of a lady of rank and fashion.

I cannot describe the sensations that oppressed me as I watched the little hand still on the window and saw that a woman stood before me. A beautiful creature, with fathomless blue eyes and a cloud of yellow hair, with flowing draperies of lace which covered but did not conceal the beauty of her form, and the snowy arms, gleaming like marble through its meshes. The splendor of her surroundings seemed not to attract her; had it been an empty hovel it would have been the same, for the look on her perfect face was that of utter weariness. There was no desire for life in the expressive azure eyes—those eyes that were now bent upon a flower—only a withered violet which she held in one hand. My heart stood still. Then there seemed to enter my mind a feeling of quiet—a desire to remain near her, a strange sympathy—and I seemed to assimilate myself to the scene before my eyes.

At length the door of the apartment was pushed hurriedly open, and then I saw that the lady shuddered and hid the violet in her bosom, while her eyes, that had sought the window, turned now with a proud and defiant expression, and fell upon the intruder. A man, magnificently handsome—a man with a dark, haughty face and a mocking gleam in his cruel eyes—entered the chamber, and, closing the door after him, turned the key in the lock. Then I saw the lady clasp her hands beseechingly; but he only smiled—a disdainful, wicked smile—and pointed to the window. But the lady shook her head, and then a disappointed look crept over his face; he clenched his fist threateningly, and left the apartment. Still I sat, transfixed with what I beheld; still the storm boomed outside, and raged with unrestrained fury, and still the lady stood in the same attitude, with her sad eyes fixed upon the outer world; and then I heard a low, faint tap on the balcony, and glancing down I saw that a rope had been suspended thence to the stream below, where a little boat lay moored. Oh, the waves of joy and gladness that swept over the beautiful face of the lady, as she flung open the window and threw her arms about the neck of the man who was entering. Although I knew him for her lover—knew that it was a sinful thing that she was doing—my heart was so filled with compassion for the woman whom I had ever heard was an unwilling and persecuted wife, that I felt only pity and sorrow for her. A thought crept into my heart then—a sense of knowledge of what the life of a wife must be who feels in her heart no love for the man to whom she is bound, irrevocably bound; and then my glance fell upon the diamond glittering on my finger, Brian West's engagement ring.

But I was aroused from my dreary musing by a terrible apparition. In at the door again there strode the form of the husband, tall, stately, defiant. There was a diabolical sneer on his handsome face as he dashed forward and caught his rival by the throat. I closed my eyes then, and when I opened them again the lover was lying dead, with a sword thrust through the heart. Then I saw the lady fall upon his body, and press her lips wildly, passionately, to those of the dead man. Like a demon in his fury, the husband sprang upon the corpse and endeavored to drag it away from her clasp; but she only clung the closer. Then I saw him raise his sword a second time; but the lady only looked up into his face proudly, firmly, as if inviting her doom. The sword descended; there was a quiver of the muscles about the proud mouth of the victim as she fell a corpse on the body of her lover, and then the murderer dragged the two bodies out upon the balcony, and then fell with a heavy splash into the dark, gloomy stream below. And then darkness dropped across my eyelids, and I fell upon the floor of the haunted chamber.

* * * * *

When life came slowly back along my veins I found myself in the same dreary apartment, no longer metamorphosed into splendor and affluence, and the dim light of a lantern burning on the little old table revealed my head resting in the arms of Arthur Redmayne. To love a man as I loved him; to separate, with scornful words, as we had thought forever, and now to owe him my rescue, perhaps my life! I sprang to my feet and confronted him coldly, proudly. Then back to my memory rushed, as with flood-tide, the terrible scene through which I had just passed, and I saw and understood the lesson which the vision taught. I hesitated but a moment. I saw my future as though in a glass—an unloving, mayhap to be a tempted wife (for are we not all "of the earth, earthly?"), a thing exposed to the highest bidder, bought as the lowest, vilest are purchased? On the other hand, perfect love, faith, trust. The die was cast. Slipping Brian West's diamond from my finger, I turned to Arthur Redmayne and laid my empty hand in his.

"Listen, Arthur," I whispered, "I did not tell you the truth. Can you ever forgive me?"

He clasped my two hands in his. And so, we were betrothed.

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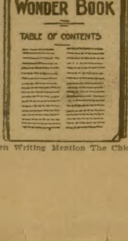

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wl; "sit down and listen to me, and I'll
ell you what an officer's good for, be he
the biggest fool out at drill—it's to put heart into you schoolboys."

He was an old soldier; and his record was the envy of his comrades. Slowly and meditatively he filled his pipe, and, looking round on his auditors, he began:

"It's nearly twelve years now, boys, since I joined the old Eighteenth; and there was few things on earth or elsewhere that I didn't think I knew. I know better now anyway. We had a young officer called Blake, who was one of the coolest hands I ever met. Nothing ever upset him; and the major did his best for him; but I'm hanged if he could learn his drill; I've heard some choice things said to him on parade; but it didn't make him turn a hair. The men couldn't help grinning often; and we had bets as to how long he would stay in the regiment. About all he thought of was his clothes, for he was a dandy, and was as smart as they make them in everything but his drill.

"Anyway, we were ordered out to humble the Apaches; and glad we were to go, for there wasn't a man with us who had seen any service. We saw it soon enough; and there's not much cake about it, I can tell you; and we soon had the fear of God driven into us by the painted devils. Our Lieutenant came out of his shell at last, and B Company was about the liveliest in the Eighteenth. No matter how long the day was, there was Mr. Blake as bright as a button at the end of it, with a jolly laugh and a full tobacco pouch. One or two of us got footsore; but when it got round that he had to cut the back of his boots off before he could put them on, why, it became a point of honor with us to keep up.

"At last our turn came; and wiser heads than mine can explain how we got licked—anyway, we had to retire, and sharp, too. The Eighteenth had suffered badly; and at all costs a stand had to be made to gain a little time. Blake was in the rear when the Colonel galloped up. 'Where's Captain Egerton?'

"'Dead, sir,' said our Lieutenant.

"'Where's Lieuteanant Brown?'

"'Dead, sir,' he replied, as cool as if he were in barracks.

"The Colonel looked hard at him under his bushy eyebrows and jerked out, 'Halt half your company, sir, and make the best stand you can. For God's sake, don't get flurried. You must keep those red devils back for half an hour.'

"'Very well, sir.'

"Off went the Colonel; and then came the order, 'Right half company halt! About turn!' and we saw our comrades march off; whilst not five hundred yards from us were the yelling redskins pursuing our broken cavalry.

"'Now, lads,' he said, quite quietly, 'we must all fire together, or we shall do no good; take your time, there's no hurry.'

"We gave those Indians blazes—and they waltzed off 'but only, as we knew, to come at us all the harder in a few minutes.

"'Now, lads, I'm just dying for a pipe—quick, light up. We'll shoot all the better if we've got our pipes going.'

"We looked at each other, whilst the bullets flicked up the dust; and I wondered if I looked as pale and as sick as the others did. ..

"'Confound those fiends!' he went on in that soft voice of his; 'if we're not quick, we won't get a light.' And he struck his match and pulled at his pipe, whilst the enemy gathered in a big swarm to pounce on us again.

"I heard a good many teeth chatter on the pipe stems; but, Lord, the difference those pipes made to us. Even Ryan, the youngest of us, a nervous one and no mistake, grinned at me, and said, 'He's a cool one, ain't he, Tom?'

"'Now, lads,' says the Lieutenant, 'here they come—give 'em hell—'

"And we did. Right up to the bayonets they came; but we fired volley after volley, until they went back, helterskelter, a second time.

"We started with forty men; and twenty-five could load a rifle when we fired into the backs of the retreating Apaches.

"'Steady, boys, keeps your pipes going.' The voice seemed a bit queerish, and I took a look behind me and saw the Lieutenant with his right arm hanging down limp, and his revolver in his left hand. 'Confound it! —what a nuisance it is!—I never learned to shoot with my left hand. I expect I'll bag one of you men.' His cheery laugh heartened us up again, and we began to see red.

"On they came again and swept on each side of us, and all that were left stood back to back. We fought like devils incarnate. Snap went my pipe stem as I drove my bayonet up to the socket in a young buck's breast.

"Hacking, stabbing, shooting, twelve men, grimed with dust and dirt, alone remained. I saw Ryan fall, cut to the waist-belt, as he leaned in front of the Lieutenant, and took the blow meant for him. Still they couldn't beat us, and eight bayonets alone remained. The Apaches drew to one side, and some who had carbines, began a brisk fusilade.

"'Good-by, lads. If anyone gets away, let him tell the regiment that Blake did well.'

"There was no time to turn and catch him as he fell, for the bullets, in a few seconds, cleared off six of us, and remembered nothing more until I woke up in the hospital.

"When I got out and went back to duty, and told the regiment what the Lieutenant said—well—but there goes 'Turn in.' Good night, all."

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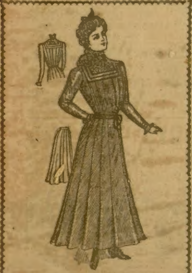
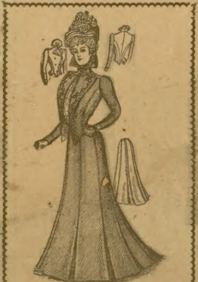
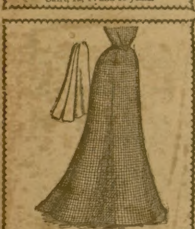


7923—Misses' Tucked Waist.
7926—Misses' Plaited Skirt.
Waist, 12, 14 and 16 years.
Skirt, 12, 14 and 16 years.



7928—Ladies' Jacket.
7924—Ladies' Eight Gored Skirt.
Jacket, 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42 inch bust.
Skirt, 22, 24, 26, 28 and 30 inch waist.



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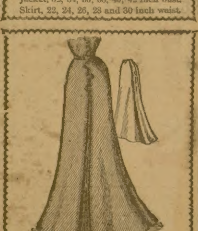

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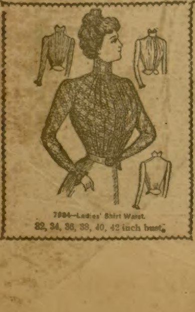

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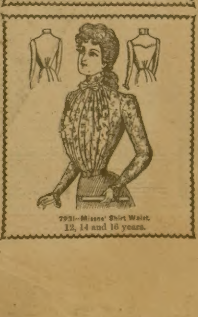

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FOR YOUTHFUL EYES.

A Monkey on a Coat-of-Arms.

The family escutcheon of the Counts of Dhaun, whose castle is now in ruins on the Rhine, bore the figure of a monkey. In the stone carving over the castle gate the monkey was represented with an apple in its hand, amusing a baby.

This strange device grew out of an incident that happened many years ago, when one of the Counts of Dhaun was left, by the death of his wife, with an infant son. The motherless child was cared for by an old nurse, and one of the sunniest rooms in the castle was assigned to them during the daytime.

In this room, also, in a corner near a window, sat a large monkey, a pet of the master's. All day it would watch the nurse as she carefully tended the baby, and at times it would try to quiet the child by its queer antics.

One day, after carefully tucking the child in its cradle, as usual, the nurse sat down beside it, and, as usual, fell asleep, too. When she awoke, she was filled with dismay, for her charge was missing. In terror of her master's wrath, the old woman fled into the forest, and stopping suddenly in her flight, as she fancied she heard a noise, she stood spell-bound at the sight before her.

There, upon the mossy trunk of a fallen tree, she saw the baby, while beside it knelt the monkey, holding before its eyes a red apple, and in every movement imitating, with absurd exactness, the actions of the nurse. The gestures were unmistakable, and the old woman, in spite of her terror, could scarcely refrain from laughter.

But just then the child began to cry, and up jumped the monkey, caught the baby in its arms, and dandled it until it fell asleep, as he had seen the woman do. Then laying it again upon the ground, the monkey sat beside it, and again, in exact imitation of the nurse began to rock itself to and fro, and finally fell asleep too.

Hurriedly catching up the child, the old woman returned to the castle as fast as she could; but their absence had been noticed, and a search was going on, so the old nurse was compelled to tell all that had occurred.

And that accounts for the image of the monkey in the family arms, for when the count found how tenderly it had cared for his child, he felt gratitude for its kindness rather than anger at its strange prank.

Boy's Enterprise.

Wallace Evans, of Philadelphia, a slender 13-year-old lad in knickerbockers, owns the largest pheasantry in the west, selling 800 eggs in a season, and hatching nearly as many birds.

Such an enterprise conducted by a boy is generally a makeshift, but the Evans pheasantry is perfect in construction, having about 175 by 200 feet under wire, with the latest improved hatcher and houses. It is divided into a network of special yards, every gate closing and locking automatically, so there is no danger of the birds escaping.

The flock of gold pheasants is a gorgeous sight, with their brilliant yellow heads, capes of orange and blue, lined with vivid green, scarlet bodies, burnished wings and long, graceful tails dotted with black. They are a fad among fanciers, and their price is increasing, as they now bring $30 a pair.

The beautifully plumaged hen lays 30 eggs in a season, which are worth $10 a dozen. Wallace has a large number of English pheasants, furnishing a fine contrast to the golden beauties. They lay from 50 to 75 eggs, which are readily sold for $5 a setting.

His covey of quails would make hunter's heart leap as they fly to cover with a whir of wings and warning cries. The old birds were imported from Tennessee, where thousands of the luckless birds follow a trail of grain leading straight into a wire-inclosed corral, and are there shipped to breeders.

In the center of each yard is a neatly stacked pile of brush and straw, which affords a native retreat for all the birds. The English pheasants are very hardy, and frolic in the snow and ice like children, but the golden hover in their houses in bitter cold weather.

Taken as a whole, the pheasantry reflects unbounded credit on its boyish proprietor, who, in addition to having the sole care of it, is finishing the eighth-grade course in the public school.

A New Definition.

"Bobbie," said the teacher to a small pupil, "what is the meaning of the word lazy?"

"Lazy," answered Bobbie, "means what a fellow ought to do himself but coaxes another fellow to do for him."

How Much?

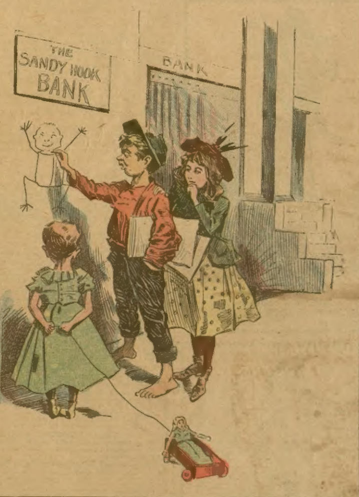
Clara, aged 4, went into a drug store the other day, and stepping up to the proprietor said, in a half whisper: "Suppose a little girl hasn't any money, how much chewing gum would you give her for a cent?"

Up to Date.

Mr. Jackson—Is yo' frum New Orelans?

Mr. Johnsing—No, sah; I'se a out o' Mobile niggah.

DRAWING ON THE BANK.



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